University of Bath

PHD

The development of literacy in Bristol and Gloucestershire 1755-1870.

Campbell, M. J.

Award date:
1980

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

Link to publication

Alternative formats
If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact:
openaccess@bath.ac.uk

Copyright of this thesis rests with the author. Access is subject to the above licence, if given. If no licence is specified above, original content in this thesis is licensed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) Licence (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/). Any third-party copyright material present remains the property of its respective owner(s) and is licensed under its existing terms.

Take down policy
If you consider content within Bath's Research Portal to be in breach of UK law, please contact: openaccess@bath.ac.uk with the details. Your claim will be investigated and, where appropriate, the item will be removed from public view as soon as possible.

Download date: 06. May. 2023

THE DEVELOPMENT OF LITERACY IN BRISTOL AND GLOUCESTERSHIRE 1755 - 1870

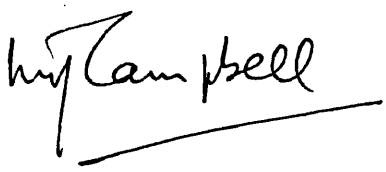
A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, School of Education, Bath University, by M.J. Campbell, M.A., M.Ed.

1980

COPYRIGHT

"Attention is drawn to the fact that copyright of this thesis rests with its author. This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author, and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the prior written consent of the author".

"This thesis may be made available for consultation within the University Library and may be photocopied or lent to other libraries for the purposes of consultation".

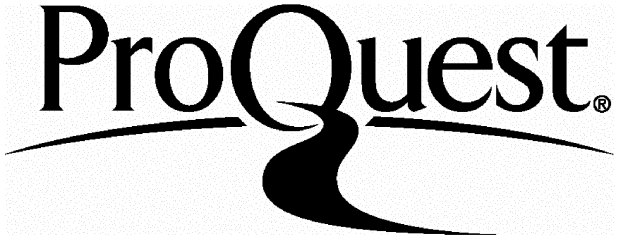


ProQuest Number: U318986

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS
The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript
and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed,
a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest U318986

Published by ProQuest LLC(2015). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.
This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

CONTENTS

Continued

Contents, continued

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Sincere and grateful thanks are offered to Mary Tasker and Dr. Christopher Frayling of Bath University for their supervision and encouragement of this thesis.

Thanks are also due to those who have generously contributed information or advice, in particular:

Richard Aldrich, Messrs. Arrowsmith, Brian Bond, A.E.Barker, Butler and Tanner Ltd., Frome, Dr. John Bishop, Dr. John Brierley, Professor C.R.Cheney, Cheney and Sons, Banbury, Dr. Frank Cumbers, Jack Gilliland, Colin Harrison, Dr. Louis James, Bryan Jerrard, Richard Johnson, Victor Neuberg, Lieutenant Colonel Peter Reese, Dr. Roger Schofield, Alan Stokes, F.B.Sullivan, Barrie Trinder, J.A.Vickers, P.J.Wright. Also to Miss Edwina Ashworth for transcriptions and Miss H.Pimm for typing the manuscript.

and also the following library services:

Bristol University, Bristol School of Education Library, The Central Library, Bristol, The Bristol City Archives, The Gloucester City and Diocesan Archives, Gloucester City Library, The Bodleian Library (John Johnson collection), Department of Education and Science Library, S.P.C.K. Archives, Methodist Archives (New Room, Bristol), British Library, Public Records Office, St. Bride's Library, National Register of Archives.

SUMMARY

The dissertation explores in detail the factors which operated to provide elementary education in Bristol 1800-1870 and analyses the effects of religious and political differences. It measures the growth of literacy by signature data in Bristol generally and SS. Philip and Jacob in particular, the latter being taken as a paradigm of a large urban parish. A significant correlation between the findings of a statistical survey of 1838 and signature data extracted from marriage records for this parish has been demonstrated. The study of Gloucestershire concentrates on analysis of signature data to give a profile of a rural county from 1755-1865. This includes comparison of female and male literacy, analysis of literacy by occupation and in relation to occupation of parent, and also the analysis of the occupational and locational distribution of couples making double marks. The study has extensive Gloucestershire prison records to establish correlations between their data and signature data, particularly in relation to the largest occupational groups. Other sources for evidence of literacy are considered, and beliefs relating to the alleged superiority in literacy of certain denominational groups challenged with new evidence.

A hierarchy of literacy by occupation is described and evidence submitted to demonstrate that this was the most important factor in the discontinuity of patterns of literacy within a county. Evidence is adduced to suggest that children, particularly sons, of artisans were educated to a measurable standard even where educational agencies were deficient. Conversely, the study emphasises the depressed educational state of agricultural and other labourers throughout much of the period in question. Attempts are made to establish the relationship of the signature to skills of general literacy for a point in the middle of the 19th century.

The dissertation pursues corroboration of occupational patterns of literacy by examining contemporary commentaries, library records, popular literature and some written remains, principally from Bristol and Gloucestershire. The results of an analysis of a range of 18th and 19th century printed materials by using readability tests is described. A tentative conclusion is that these various methodologies point to a spectrum of reading and writing skills which parallel the hierarchy of signature literacy.

Interim Definition of Literacy

The importance of defining the terms reading and writing in a historical context is clearly important, as two recent papers by Joan Simon and Richard Aldrich have clearly argued[1]. Difficulties arise when research itself redefines or extends the scope of the original definition. At present the UNESCO definitions of literacy are likely to be of little use to educational historians since the criterion

> 'A person is literate who can, with understanding, both read and write a short simple statement on his everyday life' 2

is one which it would be difficult to apply to available English data.

In common with most researchers into literacy before the 20th century we have followed Roger Schofield in considering the ability to sign a document, usually a marriage certificate, as the basic unit of literacy[3]. Where, therefore, the term literacy is used without qualification it means signature literacy. The validation and wider meaning of this unit are objectives of this study.

Joan Simon has suggested the term 'simple literacy' to cover reading alone, but this might lead to confusion. I have used the term reading to indicate the basic skill of decoding print. Little is still known, as chapter V suggests, about the further skills of 18th and 19th century readers, therefore it is considered wise to adopt a simple definition which may be qualified according to context.

In chapter V we are considering the recent definitions of reading, for example:

> ' 1. Identifying and recognising words quickly and accurately.
> 2. Arriving at an adequate understanding of the meaning intended by the writer.
> 3. Making uses of the meaning arrived at.' 4

Such a definition includes a gradation of skills. Most 19th century surveys could not attempt to estimate more than the first, so,

arguably, we need to look to other strategies to ascertain the second and, if at all possible, the third.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The present study emerged from an earlier dissertation which initially considered the relative part played in Bristol in the provision of elementary education by the Established Church and Nonconformist sects during the voluntary period 1800-1870. This led to the problem of attempting to quantify the results, in terms of literacy, of formal and informal educational provision before the existence of objective tests or testing. My standpoint throughout this study is that of an educationalist interested in historical reconstruction but in no way claiming skills in demography or sociology.

Unlike the comprehensive records kept by Swedish Deaneries of the standards of members of individual families in the 18th and 19th centuries, there are few specific records of literacy as such in England. Some 19th century clergymen made attempts to record the educational achievements or levels of literacy of some of their parishioners, and there are examples of these in the Gloucestershire archives, but they are too few and too disparate to be more than of passing interest. English research has relied in the past and is currently relying for its main source upon the evidence provided by signatures attached to legal documents such as wills or the marriage certificate. Much of the evidence, then, might more properly be called 'signature literacy' but some researches attempt to show the relationship of this to other skills of literacy. This was considered to be one important objective in the present study.

The dissertation proceeds by way of three main studies, the Bristol evidence, the Gloucestershire evidence, and thirdly consideration of some of the printed and manuscript materials available in the West of England which might illuminate findings made in the first two.

The first case study includes a detailed examination of the

educational provision in Bristol, followed by a microstudy of one parish which is of particular interest, partly owing to its size and partly owing to the existence of a survey mounted in 1838 by the Bristol Statistical Society which was concentrated within its boundary. SS. Philip and Jacob is taken as a paradigm of a large urban parish which appears to have outgrown its parochial machinery and certainly outgrew its educational provision.

Chapters 3 and 4 are concerned with testing various hypotheses using extensive data extracted from marriage and prison records deposited in the Bristol and Gloucestershire archive collections. The study was limited to these two counties in order to ensure that a detailed collection of data could be made; a reasonable inference from earlier studies being that further studies in English literacy required investigation at the micro level. Neither county has been the subject of previous research in this field for the period under consideration.

Correlation between 'signature literacy' and other evidence of literacy was thought to be a priority, for strong relationships between this evidence and, for example, the educational data contained in the statistical survey already mentioned would not only increase our knowledge of the meaning of signature literacy but would help to re-establish the validity and value of at least one Victorian survey, conducted, it would seem, with considerable care and at some expense.

The same might be said of 19th century prison statistics relating to literacy. Extensively used to prove a relationship between ignorance and crime in their own time, they have frequently been rejected by students of literacy in our own time as being worthless or misleading as an index of literacy in general. However, whereas a 19th century thinker might assume that the inmate of a prison was, by definition, a degenerate, our own views have largely changed. It was my position that if it were possible

to extract a sufficiently large occupational group from prison records and marriage registers, there was no logical reason why their literacy rates should be significantly different. So, for example, if one concentrated on data concerning agricultural labourers in years where prison records and marriage records coincided there should be a strong relationship between the literacy of those in custody and those enjoying their freedom. Again, as in the case of Statistical Surveys, a firm relationship would not only extend our knowledge of signature literacy but would go some way to restoring the value of prison statistics, at least where the occupational structure of the sample can be ascertained. The existence of detailed description books of prisoners remanded in custody pending Gloucester Assizes for 1812-1844 enabled us to test this hypothesis.

Earlier work, especially by Dr.M.Sanderson and Dr.R.Schofield, had alerted me to the importance of the occupational factor in the analysis of literacy. This can more readily be studied after 1837 when marriage records required details of bridegroom's and bride's occupation where relevant, and the occupation of their respective fathers. Patterns which began to emerge as the data were collected, particularly the clear superiority, in terms of literacy, of Cheltenham, suggested the hypothesis that the concentration there of relatively skilled workers and those engaged in service industries, and the comparative absence of manual labourers, was the key to this superiority. The disparity in literacy between towns of different sizes and rural parishes noted by many researchers and especially Professor W.B. Stephens might be explicable in relatively simple terms: namely that different social organisations which come into being as the result of economic forces require different combinations and proportions of occupational groups. It is the literacy of these which determines the overall literacy of the groupings.

A considerable part of Chapter 4 is concerned with the exploration and resolution of this hypothesis.

Interest in the importance of occupational literacy led to the positing of further questions concerning the relationship between various occupational groups and the literacy of their offspring. It seemed to be a proposition worth testing that those artisan groups who had relatively high literacy rates would take some care, by whatever means, to ensure that their offspring obtained similar skills. It might be that where resources were limited there would be some discrimination between male and female offspring.

The whole question of female literacy was raised at an early point in the study, since the broad figures for Gloucestershire revealed that, in common with some other predominantly agricultural counties in the 19th century, more women than men showed signature literacy before 1870. In attempting to explain why this happened it seemed necessary to ascertain where, in terms of parental occupation, it occurred, since this could illuminate the social or economic forces responsible for the process.

Some might argue that before some given date, say 1840, the ability to write or even read was of no particular advantage since it was still possible to enjoy cultural benefits and normal communication through oral transmission. As Dr. Schofield has pointed out, some of our most important ceremonies: the legal oath until recently, and the marriage vows still, assumed or assume the possibility that participants may be unable to read[5]. At what point in the century the ability to do neither was a disadvantage to a man or woman or was regarded as a stigma would be difficult to establish precisely since there is a strong contextual factor in addition. However, to consider this from a positive point of view, it is clear that in the 19th century a number of new occupations emerged which required basic

literacy as an essential condition of employment: work associated with the running of the railways and the post office being examples. In addition there were reforms in various other occupations: the police after the Borough Reforms of 1856, the Army for its non-commissioned officers after , and in some regiments, before, the Crimean War, meant that literacy became a prerequisite either for appointment or promotion. Other developments occurred which appear to have had the effect of excluding the illiterate; the statutes of early co-operative societies, for example, often required members to read and write, though to what extent these rules were enforced is not clear. Apart from the limitations increasingly imposed on upward mobility, inability to write either reduced the likelihood of physical mobility, over any appreciable geographical distance, or imposed absolute severance for those who chose to work away from their families and places of origin. However, families in which one of the partners had reasonable skills of literacy were arguably not as disadvantaged as those in which both were. Hence, it is of interest to consider the incidence of double signature illiteracy, to chart its decline and note the areas, both occupational and geographical, where this was most pronounced.

What Professor Egil Johansson has called the "push-pull" theory of literacy, in which some groups are pulling towards literacy skills and in which organisations, ecclesiastical or lay, are attempting to push other groups up to literacy may be seen to be operating clearly in 19th century Gloucestershire. With the data available it has been possible to distinguish quite clearly which occupational groups were pulling and which needed to be pushed[6].

There are other groupings whose literacy is of particular interest but the data concerning which proved to be largely inaccessible. These were the denominational sects, for it has been widely held that some of

these, particularly Methodists and Quakers, by their strong emphasis on the word and its individual internalisation, exercised a strong 'pull' towards literacy skills on their members. As will be reported later, the search revealed negative evidence of considerable interest and suggested hypothetical reasons for the possible superiority of such sects, though no ready means of verifying them.

Analysis of the data from an occupational viewpoint shows that there are strong linking factors as opposed, for example, to some of the discontinuities observed by considering data from strictly geographical viewpoints. Comparison with other regional studies reinforces this point, and some occupations show a remarkable homogeneity of signature literacy: a phenomenon which calls for explanation.

Any attempt to equate the signature with other skills of literacy is likely to be an approximation and applicable, probably, for a brief period of time only. Even so, if we accept that for, say, 1840-1850, the ability to sign a document suggested a minimum level of education which included a competency in reading, we cannot begin to measure the range of ability above that which might have been possessed by the signatee. This is the point at which the simple dichotomy between literate and illiterate is inadequate[7], and where we need to determine which groups were along which scale[8]. It is a difficult problem and demands a different methodology from estimating and analysing signature data. Collateral evidence from surveys may give some help and the piecing together of evidence from contemporary and recent studies may make further contributions. But these descriptive methods require the reinforcement of an objective structure. The final section of this study is a consideration of various paths to a greater understanding of the relative skills of general literacy possessed by different working groups in 18th and 19th century England using, with a

number of reservations, one such objective measurement.

Much work has been done on popular literature of this period by R.K.Webb, R.D.Altick, Louis James, Victor Neuberg and others, and further attempts may appear to be supererogatory. However, inasmuch as this is a regional rather than a national study, it is the intention to consider, where possible, the local evidence, though the very nature of print and its dissemination will mean that clear boundaries and divisions cannot be drawn.

The intention, primarily, is to consider the material which was aimed at the audience of working people and to see how this illuminates or qualifies the pattern of literacy proposed by the first four chapters of this study. Our main concern is to amplify our knowledge of the literacy of working people in Bristol and Gloucestershire 1760-1870 and to consider what was provided and how accessible it was, particularly to the rural dweller, physically and in terms of comprehension.

We shall attempt to find what reading ability specific groups may have attained on the spectrum between the extreme views proposed by recent and contemporary commentators. For example, on the one hand we have estimates that the state of 18th century education was hardly sufficient in itself to create a reading public[9], and observations of 1852 that though the bulk of the population had been taught to spell they had not been taught truly to read.

> "They have a craving for intellectual food, but not discernment enough to select what is good and wholesome in quality." 10

Similarly W.B.Hodgson in 1867 suggested that the important question was what children were taught to do with their literacy once they had it. Reading and writing were only "instrumentalities" and it was up to the nation and the nation's educators to review the ends which they might serve[11].

Conversely, we have various testimonies that reading tastes and accomplishments changed radically within, for example, the life span of James Lackington. In that period, he claimed in his autobiography, reading had become universal and the works of Smollett and Fielding were eagerly pursued. Webb, Altick and James quote extensive figures to show that the increase of print numbers of periodicals, newspapers, books and more ephemeral literaure had been enormous. An early worker in the field, Mrs.Q.D.Leavis, working mainly from subjective sources, tends to give the impression that the period was a golden age of literature before the shades of the prison house in the form of Forster's Act of 1870 came

> "to damp this amazing enthusiasm for 'enlightenment' or else side-track it, at best turning the potential Lackingtons into Lewishams." 12

It would be unfair to judge harshly such an early and courageous pioneering work, even though Mrs. Leavis has not substantially changed her original views[13].

Between these polarities there are considerable gradations of opinion concerning the literacy of working people, and one is reminded of the considerable variety of views concerning 18th and 19th century literacy we shall attempt to reconcile in the following chapters. The factors which influenced this variety, economic, geographical and educational, will no doubt be important factors in the distribution and use of printed materials, but possibly the greatest factor will be related to the occupational status.

There are considerable problems in assessing readership from print runs. As Thomas Laqueur noted in writing of Sunday School literature, the historian cannot be certain, whether or to what degree, it was read by those to whom it was directed[14]. Similarly, as Elizabeth Eisenstein points out, references to wide dissemination often fail to make clear how patterns of consumption were affected by increased production[15]. Similarly, she notes the difficulty in differentiating between acquisition of literacy and

habitual book-reading. By no means all who master the printed word become members of the reading public and this is likely to have been at least as true in the 18th and 19th centuries as today.

Book ownership by working people is one important, if notoriously difficult, route to a greater knowledge of reading habits. This has not been attempted in the present study, but we have concentrated on analysing library records, locally printed chapbooks and quasi-chapbooks, the progress and success of tract societies, religious and secular, the autobiographies of some West of England working men and a collection of manuscript letters from our paradigm parish. It is not intended that this should form a sociological analysis, but rather a means of relating what we have revealed of patterns of signature literacy to some of the expressions of or opportunities for a more general literacy.

An early hypothesis which emerged from this part of the study was that some of the material which is sometimes confidently asserted to have been read and understood by the majority in the early years of the 19th century (for example Paine's 'Rights of Man') was too difficult for those with limited reading skills. A standardised readability test suggested that this work would present a considerable challenge, in terms of surface difficulty, to large sections of a modern English readership. This led to the attempt to analyse a range of 18th and 19th century material using modern readability measures and, crude and imperfect though this methodology may be, it is a means of differentiating between material which may throw some interesting light on patterns of comprehension.

This, then, is the broad framework for the following chapters.

CHAPTER 1

(i) A survey of the research literature of 18th and 19th century literacy in England

The importance of the quest has been emphasised by various historians and Peter Laslett has written:

> "The discovery of how great a proportion of the population could read and write at any point in time is one of the most urgent of the tasks which face the historian of social structure, who is committed to the use of numerical methods. But the challenge is not simply to find the evidence and to devise ways of making it yield reliable answers. It is a challenge to the historical and literary imagination." 1

Similarly, Professor Harold Silver, writing of the relationship between schooling and literacy, states that although some useful statistical work has been done in this area, there has been little systematic analysis (at least for the period after the 1830's) of literacy and reading matter, literacy and participation in social and political movements (e.g. the Co-operative movement) or literacy and the commercial press from the mid-1840's[2].

Gillian Sutherland[3] suggests that the researcher needs to go beyond the immediate and enormous question why and consider the other question "So what?" What effects in terms of employment, Chartist activity, and behaviour did literacy have ? How much does it matter, she asks, that more people could read, go to school, go to University ? And these questions, "banal and familiar as they may seem", have still to be adequately answered for most societies at most times. She suggests that the answers may be different for different societies at different times and with a variety and subtlety far beyond the simple division of societies into pre-industrial and industrial. And just because the relationships between education and social structure 'are various, involve structural discontinuities and are singularly lacking in symmetry', there is a whole new important field for exploration in the history of education.

Such is the nature of the importance and the scope of the work. However, much work at a national level and for some regional areas has been done and the following is a summary of published contributions since 1950 - which also incorporates material provided by my study of the Bristol and Gloucestershire evidence.

One of the earliest contributors to the study of literacy in 18th-19th century England was R.K.Webb, and in a closely documented article published in 1950[4] he describes a quantity of data from statistical surveys, enquiries, official surveys, Parliamentary Reports and anecdotal sources. Using some of the material from investigations into specific trades he attempts to seek some consensus for the broad divisions of Agricultural Districts, Mining and Metals, Handloom Weavers, Railway Labour and Industrial Areas.

The inference to be drawn from a plethora of data is that no clear patterns emerge: that the disparity of the figures is so considerable that little reliance can be placed upon them as indices of the literacy of the entire country. Even an approximate assessment would be misleading, unless it were realised that the average may mask a situation which varied, particularly in remote districts, from parish to parish. The causes of such variation could be numerous: geographical or economic position, the complications of migration and nationality, the incidence of charitable enterprises either of large societies or of a more localised nature.

Webb is prepared to hazard a guess that in the 1840's, a period for which a considerable amount of statistical data is available, the reading ability seems to hover about two-thirds to three-quarters of the working classes, perhaps nearer the latter than the former. He enters an immediate caveat that many of those included within this category could probably barely read at all and many more, though capable of reading, rarely did so.

He further surmises that of the 20% to 40% remaining totally illiterate the greater part of these would have belonged to the very lowest brackets of society.

He deduces from this that some degree of literacy must have been universally diffused in the portion of the working classes which made up "the great political potential in English Society".

Webb dismisses criminal statistics as no accurate index of the rate of literacy, however convenient or appalling they might be. We shall return to this proposition later.

Further general points which he makes - in common with most workers in this field - are that the number of those able to read always exceeds the number able to write their signature. Additionally he notes the considerable improvement in the ability of some occupational groups, notably recruits for the Navy and Marines examined in 1865, to read well: in fact 61.17% of a total of 57,308.

Although there is no suggestion that Webb is taking a roseate view, and he specifically warns against doing this, there are indications that he is readier to accept figures which suggest a larger rather than a smaller reading public, and while one would agree with his basic contention that 1870 was far less of a watershed than is sometimes supposed, percentages may hide the huge numbers of the population, particularly those in labouring, agricultural or mining occupations, whose educational accomplishments were minimal.

Webb quotes a contemporary calculation by Joseph Fletcher H.M.I.[5] who insisted that the ability to sign one's name was to be equated with the ability to read well. Although this is dismissed by Webb as running counter to the weight of evidence and common sense, it is a proposition which Dr.R. Schofield in an important paper referred to later accepts. There is more than a suggestion that Webb has not entirely grasped the point which Fletcher was making, namely that this appeared to be a statistical equation rather than one which was necessarily reflected in all particular cases. Certainly, this is a concept worth considering in other contexts, though if it was true for the 1840's it does not necessarily follow that it was true at later points in the century.

Webb was working from secondary sources, and although he makes shrewd and important deductions he was unable to correlate his findings with any primary evidence, for example marriage records. The advantage of a local study is that it is possible to attempt this, and, particularly in the case of agricultural workers, miners and handloom weavers, later evidence will show that these apparently intractable figures bear a much greater relation to discrete occupational figures from marriage records than might be supposed.

An important consideration which is implicit in Webb's findings concerning literacy is the disparity between different occupational groups, which has alerted a number of workers to this as an important factor in the history of literacy, though, perhaps surprisingly, more work has been done on earlier centuries, using data culled from Special Marriage Licences, Wills etc., as opposed to the 19th century where the data from 1839 is more extensive and covers the whole spectrum of occupational activity.

Professor Stone[6] has given a valuable summary of educational trends over an extensive period, synthesising, for the most part, published material and producing some stimulating conjectures which may explain the past and alert us to educational developments in the future.

He joins other students of literacy in emphasising the impetus given to literacy by Protestantism, and it would be difficult to refute this as a broadly acceptable generalisation. His attempt to substantiate the logical progression of this, that the more extreme the Protestantism the more complete the literacy, is less convincing. He quotes the so-called evidence of Quaker marriage records which first appeared in JSSL XXX 1867[7]. As we shall show elsewhere this original assertion was based upon a fundamental misunderstanding. It is exceptionally difficult to obtain evidence as to the comparative literacy of different denominational groups and though the Methodists, following the lead of their founder, set considerable store by the word, spoken and printed, there is no

firm evidence for the 18th and early 19th century that Methodists of the lowest occupational groups were any more literate, numerically, than their Anglican equivalents. What may be true and is suggested by early membership books in the New Room, Bristol, is that Methodism was more popular among artisan and affiliant occupations than among labouring groups. Similarly, their evangelistic warmth was not confined to their religious beliefs: the enthusiasm with which many shared their skills in reading emerges clearly from James Lackington's autobiography and other Methodist autobiographies.

Stone considers that the rise of popular education in the 19th century was largely a by-product of the struggle between Anglicans and Dissenters for the allegiance of the lower classes. Our own study of the patterns of educational provision in 19th century Bristol certainly shows that Dissenters largely led, though the capital they invested, and accordingly the number of children they educated, was comparatively small. It is difficult to accept the view that their prime concern was to secure allegiance: certainly, much of the local evidence points to indifference on the part of parents to the tenets held by the providers unless they happened to be Roman Catholics: their main concern was the quality of education dispensed.

Stone includes useful material concerning the relationship between economic considerations and the school leaving age in the first part of the 19th century. He cites the rector of Wigginton, Oxfordshire, who had set out with enthusiasm to provide education in his parish but, by 1815, was disillusioned. He found almost insuperable indifference from parents in general and neglect in forcing regular attendance at school and frequently children were detained at home for household purposes. They sent the boys to work as soon as they were able and girls to lace-making. Thirdly, he found a parental dislike of having their children "anyways in subjection" to the children of other people or subject to any kind of punishment.

He notes a contemporary comment which concluded that it was not surprising

that, when three children over 8 years old could double the weekly income of a family, parents should withdraw those children from school. Stone considers that the school leaving age, and therefore literacy, varied in inverse correlation with the opportunities for employment and the prosperity of the family household: the higher the demand for child labour, the greater the family income but the lower the standards of literacy.

This is an important proposition and deserves analysis. Our own statistics for Gloucestershire suggest that this equation operated at the lowest occupational levels only. It is possible from 1839 onwards to analyse literacy by parental occupation and, as will be seen, a distinct hierarchy emerges: the children of parents of some occupations are almost always (at the decadal points 1845 and 1855) illiterate, those of parents of higher order skills or trades almost always literate and a fine gradation exists between these two points. So distinct is the spectrum that it might be reasonable, with exceptions like miners, to hypothesise the income differentials between them. One would accept Stone's equation with the reservation that certain classes would educate their children to a particular standard irrespective of the availability of opportunities for child employment either in or outside the home. This applied, in substantial numbers, to a larger range of occupational groups than may generally be supposed.

Evidence is cited which suggests that in most rural areas boys left school at approximately 10 and girls at about 14 or 15; consequently girls in some country districts were more numerously literate than boys. This proposition is broadly confirmed by the Gloucestershire figures, but, interestingly, it does not apply uniformly across occupational groups, as will be seen.

Most of Stone's particular evidence is based on a microstudy of Oxfordshire. He makes the clear inference that in early 19th century rural England the poor were largely dependent for their instruction on the charity of the rich. This situation was not substantially altered until after the middle of the century.

Consequently a parish with a country house occupied by a resident landlord fared much better than one without. After the middle of the century this role was increasingly assumed by the clergy.

Stone supplies an interesting graph incorporating material drawn from records of bridegrooms marrying by licence in the Oxford Archdeaconry and Gloucester Diocese, c. 1635-1822. Evidence from marriages by licence is likely to be atypical, as he freely states, and the number of labourers and servants marrying by licence was extremely small in ratio to their proportion of the population. However, seen in conjunction with our figures for Gloucestershire for subsequent decades they provide further evidence of the hierarchy of literacy which may be found among artisan groups.

Dr. R.Schofield has been responsible for much of the quantitative survey of literacy undertaken by the Cambridge Population Studies Group[8]. Various papers and articles which he has produced have been largely based on evidence obtained from an extensive sample of parish records undertaken by voluntary workers throughout the United Kingdom. The resulting data, though unpublished, are available for reference in the Group's Library in Cambridge.

Schofield has concentrated on this evidence as he finds that whatever its inherent inadequacies it is more objective than attempts to gauge literacy in terms of readership suggested by publication figures or by records of school attendance. Whereas a survey of this kind gives valuable pointers and shows national trends, it can hide, as Dr. Schofield points out, inequalities and anomalies particularly concerning differences between urban and rural areas and size and characteristics of parishes. The survey adumbrated the value of regional studies.

Another feature of this study is that Schofield, relying on a large body of volunteers including young students, concentrates on the basic data of literacy and was unable, except for a limited number, to consider literacy by occupation. However, a valuable table has been calculated from a sample of 23 marriage registers which, unusually, give occupations for the period 1754-1784. This is reproduced and considered elsewhere. It was due to Schofield's suggestion that the relationship between illiteracy and occupation would repay investigation that this present study has considered this aspect in such detail, and extended the search by considering the relationship between literacy and parental occupation.

Schofield makes out a convincing case for the value of marriage signatures as an index of literacy and accepts what some workers reject, J.F.Fletcher's proposition that early 19th century evidence suggests that the proportion of those able to sign their names roughly corresponded with

the proportion able to read fluently.

We shall return to Dr. Schofield's work at various stages in order to compare and contrast his findings in various areas with our own.

Dr. Michael Sanderson[9] uses figures drawn from his own examination of marriage registers in Lancashire to posit that a rise in literacy took place in the early 18th century but that there was a fall, sometimes drastic, from the 1780's to the 1820's before a possible upward turn in the last decade of the period. He notes a virtual cessation of school endowment in the twenty years of the Napoleonic wars and found that rural performance was rather better than that of urban and industrial areas, and that by the end of the 1830's the younger generation possessed a higher degree of literacy than their parents whose education had suffered in the decline.

Sanderson has produced a valuable occupational-literacy table which will be reproduced and commented on later. One source which he has drawn upon is the register of Lancaster Charity School with the occupations of fathers and first occupations of sons. He catalogues the first occupations of sons of labourers and finds that only one became a labourer and all the others moved into more literate occupations. As he says, the experience of education for the sons of men of this low origin was such that few failed to take a step upwards in the social scale. On these grounds he dissents from the view of Professor Laurence Stone that literacy did nothing to improve the prospects of the labourer and that his social and economic advancement was not related to elementary education.

As will be seen later, the position in Gloucestershire vis-à-vis literacy is a very different one, particularly in terms of the relative position of rural and urban areas. Cheltenham, the largest town in Gloucestershire in the early part of the 19th century, shows a remarkably high degree of literacy and the proportion of literate labourers is markedly higher than the overall figures for labourers in the county.

However, Lawrence Stone's basic proposition is not necessarily confounded by Sanderson's interesting but somewhat selective evidence. There is little doubt that schooling where available to the labouring classes could effect upward social mobility; however, in the 1830's in a rural county very few

labourers were able to send their children to school at all or long enough for them to achieve a measurable educational standard. As will be seen in tables constructed from the Gloucestershire figures the percentages of children of labourers who achieved such standards always lagged considerably behind those of children of parents with occupations in the middle groups.

Some comparative studies, as adumbrated by Professor Stone, have been carried out and a series of papers edited by J.Goody contain some of the results[10].

In one particular survey of literacy in East Pakistan in the mid 1960's which is referred to a sample of rural cultivators were asked whether they could read a newspaper. 57% claimed they could, but subsequent testing revealed that 15% in fact either could not read at all or could only stumble through the text with little comprehension. The level of ability among the 42% who really could read also varied considerably: about half of them could read slowly but with comprehension while a half (or 22% of the sample) could read fluently.

It is apparent that there is some overestimate of reading ability when self-reports are used, but not serious exaggeration. This is an interesting and valuable figure to bear in mind because, especially in the large-scale surveys and enquiries made in the first part of the 19th century, most of the questions were concerned with beliefs or claims made by individuals relating to their reading skills.

A further finding of this survey in East Pakistan may illuminate some of the obscure corners of our knowledge of the relationship between literacy and primary education. Researchers found that the degree of literacy was almost identical to the amount of primary education and in addition was substantially related to verbal ability. Consequently, the authors argue, as it may be assumed that reading will have an extrinsic importance in a man's life, there is every reason to expect literacy to be significantly and strongly associated with many attitudes and values. This proved to be true in the study in question and it seemed that the ability to read had the same pervasive influence on a man in East Pakistan as has education in other parts of the world[11]. The answers to various other questions showed that movement towards political identity, innovation, and aspiration to education were substantially greater in literates

than illiterates because these are spread by books, newspapers, school books and related sources of communication[12].

An important difference between the situation described in this study and that of an English 'cultivator' in the early part of the 19th century is the availability of print at a price and of appropriate interest and readability level. This will be considered later, but the point to be made here is that some hypotheses arising from historical research into literacy which cannot now be treated empirically may at some stage be tested in developing nations.

A final point which may be noted from this stimulating article is that it is claimed that higher functional intelligence in East Pakistan is by no means a monopoly of those who have had the benefit of primary education and have learned to read. Many unlettered men are apparently quicker to grasp verbal matters than their more literate fellow workers.

One is reminded of a perennial debate which has flourished in the past concerning the allegation that illiterates have better memories than their literate peers. In a work which relies substantially on conjecture, Professor R.B.Collison[13] claims that illiterate people often had remarkable memories:

> "Aided by the recommended and familiar tune at the head of the ballad, many a listener would effortlessly commit the verses to memory after only two or three times." 14

W.E.Adams, writing about the 1840's, refers to the argument, often heard, that people who were not educated had better memories and made better workmen than those who were. The idea was so prevalent that J.S.Mill set himself to confute it[15].

One major difficulty which may never be satisfactorily resolved is the relationship between a signature and the ability to read. In every study made in 18th/19th century England readers outnumbered writers and, given the educational emphasis in all schools, but especially Sunday Schools which rarely taught children or adults to write, this is a likely outcome. However, the ratio fluctuates widely: dependent on era, locality, ages of sample,

educational, occupational and social background. Ratios for convicted prisoners, for example, are likely to be different from those for workhouse apprentices, and a theory based on the latter is likely to be as optimistic as one based on the former would probably be pessimistic.

Our own findings in some of the poorest urban areas would suggest that the ratio of readers to writers (i.e. those able to inscribe a signature) was 77.5:51.9, i.e. approximately 3:2. This from a sample of 9861 also completed in 1838, in Bristol. This 3:2 ratio is frequently invoked and may be an approximate guide[16]. On the other hand, as the majority of estimates in prisons, statistical societies and elsewhere were apparently the results of verbal testimonies we have little means of knowing what the ability to read actually signified. However, it may be reasonable to suppose that, since the ability to write usually meant, at its lowest level, the ability to sign a name, the ability to read probably meant more than the mere recognition of letters, but, at its lowest level, little more than the ability to recognise simple key words, street names etc. at least until midway through the 19th century.

Although, superficially, a figure of 77.5 able to read in an extremely deprived area of Bristol in 1837 may appear somewhat reassuring, we should remember that we have no way of measuring their capabilities beyond that low minimum. It may be salutary to keep in mind the brief comments of W.B.Fripp, who presented the report to the Bristol Statistical Society:

> "No test could be generally applied by the agent to ascertain the ability of the parents or children to read or write, and the fact therefore has been taken on their own testimony only. There can be no doubt that the degree in which these elements of instruction are possessed is far inferior to what might be inferred from the mere numbers stated in this return." 17

R.D.Altick and V.E.Neuberg argue from a somewhat different standpoint. The latter, writing of the 18th century, points to the ever-increasing incidence of the printed word, on flysheets and tradesmen's announcements,

verse epitaphs, posy rings, sundial mottoes and the increasing use of wrapping papers by shop-keepers and merchants, often incorporating name, address, trademark and, occasionally, something more in words[18]. He infers that the greater opportunities would both bring ordinary people into contact with print, and an inability to cope with it would set individuals very much at a social and economic disadvantage. Some early Co-operative stores, for example, applied a literacy test and those who failed to reach its standards were debarred[19]. Among some early rules was:

> "A man is not eligible to be a member unless he can read or write, and in general he must produce a specimen of his work." 20

Certainly, in towns, at least, there were clear incentives to literacy and, generally speaking, this is reflected in the substantially higher literacy figures for towns in Gloucestershire in our period. However, generally better educational provision is also a major contributory factor and where it lagged behind an expanding population, as in the abnormally large parish of St. Philip and Jacob in Bristol in the 19th century, the result could be a lower general literacy rate than that found in rural areas.

There are clear dangers in assuming that because certain sections of the populace became increasingly familiar with print that this was so of the population as a whole. It may be true, though difficult to prove, that even the illiterate were changed by the increasing reliance by others on books. We do not know, as E.L.Eisenstein points out, how patterns of consumption were affected by increased production[21]. There are too many imponderables: the possibility of over-production, especially of tracts, being an obvious one. All heavily subsidised publications must be highly suspect when we attempt to quantify readership from this standpoint.

There are stronger indications that the entrepreneurial press reacted to demands and, indeed, capabilities of readers with some accuracy and these may be some guide to genuine readership figures. Here, however, there is a tendency by some writers to inflate actual readership figures by asserting

multiple readership of newspapers, periodicals and books on the basis of a supposed informal network of distribution. Probably the most memorable description of this system occurs in the early part of Hardy's "Trumpet Major", but fiction, however meticulously researched and accurate in particular may not be a guide to general practice.

It has been calculated that London papers were read by 30 persons per copy provincial papers by 8-20, in the early 19th century, and as they were printed on rag-paper could tolerate more handling than modern paper[22].

If we consider circumstantial and anecdotal evidence we are faced by an interesting but confusing kaleidoscope of impressions, usually strongly biased by the particular viewpoint of the author. On the one hand there is the glowing impression of 18th century rural literacy implied by Ashton writing of traditional chapbooks:

> "Pennyworths, suitable to everybody's taste, and within the reach of anybody's purse, owing to their extremely low price, which must, or ought to have, extracted every available copper in the village, when the chapman opened his budget of brand-new books." 23

Conversely, James Lackington, at a low ebb in his career as a Methodist, alleged that many of Wesley's preachers were very ignorant, extremely illiterate and unable to read a chapter in the Bible though they had the rashness to pretend to explain them. Others, he claimed, were unable to write their own names[24]. In a later reconciliation with the sect he revoked many of his former allegations, and yet there may have been a measure of truth in them.

Some anecdotal light is shed on rural literacy by W.E.Adams, writing of Cheltenham in the first part of the 19th century. He claimed that among his contemporaries in the poorer classes it was a distinction to be able to read and write: to do more was almost accounted a phenomenon[25]. However, in 1836 a Gloucestershire farmer claimed that most of his labourers could read and that the rising generation of poorer classes in his part of the country

could almost universally read and frequently write[26]. Many farmers, however, did not relish the thought of the labouring class becoming wiser than themselves[27].

One would expect that contemporary writers would have a different viewpoint from that of employers: especially employers whose industries were labour intensive and required manual skills. E. Austin, a 19th century Bristol correspondent of "The Times", made interesting references to the alleged illiteracy of juries. He claimed that many, had they been required to sign their verdicts, would have appeared as 'marksmen' and were so oblivious of the ordinary forms of proceeding as to work positive injustice (c. 1840)[28]

Writing of the trial and execution of Sarah Harriet Thomas (April 1849) he describes a confession which the girl had prepared: it was a lengthy document, interlarded with references to passages of Scripture, between parentheses which bore her mark, admitted her guilt and prayed for her forgiveness. "How much of it she understood is a matter on which I will not venture to speculate."

Polarised as some of these impressions appear to be, most of them can be fitted into the pattern of literacy of 18th/19th century Bristol and Gloucestershire which we intend to describe. What emerges strongly from much anecdotal material is that literacy, at least until 1860 and sometimes beyond it, varied considerably according to occupation and location. This is corroborated when we look at detailed analyses of literacy for different occupational groups and areas for our period.

Since, without standardised and reasonably objective tests, estimates of the prevalence and quality of reading are likely to be influenced by the standpoint of their authors, so some doubt has been cast on the reliability of 19th century investigators and inspectors. Webb claims that many such who would expect a school-child to read and explain a Bible passage would

have a correspondingly high standard for adults and might well categorise a man who was unable to discern many words or the sense of a straightforward expository passage as barely able to read, even though that individual might be able to gain some pleasure from a simple piece of sheet literature or a working class paper.[29]

Similarly, W.P.Baker quotes from 'Lark Rise to Candleford' in which Flora Thompson claimed that statistics relating to illiteracy of that period (19th century) were often misleading since many who could read and write sufficiently for their own purposes would disclaim any pretensions to being 'scholards'. Some, she claimed, who could write their names quite well would make a cross as signature on a document out of nervousness or modesty[30].

We shall return to this later when considering the validity of marriage signatures as evidence of literacy, but it is worth noting that both in East Yorkshire and in Gloucestershire there was a point well before 1870 at which female literacy overtook male literacy, although this never occurred at a national level. If diffidence on the part of women was a factor then we must infer that it followed no regional patterns.

The strong suggestion is that, before 1870, patterns of literacy reflected educational provision and, more importantly, willingness of parents both to pay school fees and, a greater sacrifice, forego the potential additions to income which wage-earning children might produce. Consequently there are indications that during strong periods of economic growth, in the late 18th and early 19th century, illiteracy in some occupations actually rose[31]. This is particularly true of poor urban areas, as we shall see when considering the parish of St. Philip and St. Jacob, Bristol, in detail. Another factor to bear in mind in the 19th century is that as a result of increasing use of powered machinery the age at which, physically, children could work in certain industries where agility rather than strength was at a premium, was reduced. Consequently one finds the situation emerging of an economy which created a whole range of

new occupations which required even less literacy and education than the old ones[32].

Thomas Laqueur in a wide-ranging essay[33] raises some interesting possibilities,particularly those concerning the existence in the 18th and 19th centuries of an elaborate network of informal schools and other means of learning to read and write. Although he accepts that the historical record for this is somewhat obscure, he cites a number of anecdotal sources to give weight to his argument. Other research, he claims, has shown that there is no simple causal relationship between the educational provision and literacy. In a highly conjectural statement he proposes that the educational experiences of the 18th century poor make it clear that an elementary education was an integral part of bringing up the child within the family. In wide strata of the lower ranks of society, teaching children at the least to read was imperative. Large numbers, therefore, became literate because their parents, relatives, or friends of their parents were literate: reading and writing were skills sufficiently valued by the community for them to be passed on through a variety of channels as part of the cultural heritage of the past[34].

In support of this view he cites the experiences of James Lackington, which may, he considers, in many ways be "paradigmatic", though many would consider that, entertaining and illuminating as his memoirs are, they are scarcely paradigmatic. He was undoubtedly one of the most successful entrepreneurs of his age and although the poverty of his childhood contrasted strongly with the wealth and influence of his later years, he was the son of a journeyman shoemaker; rather higher in the occupational scale than Laqueur implies.

He also cites evidence painstakingly collected by other researchers of books left in wills of the poor; but in the majority of these cases it emerges that they were artisans or sons of artisans; as has been said elsewhere, the really poor rarely made wills.

He recognises, himself, the dangers of generalising from the experiences of artisans' children to those of the labouring agricultural masses, but then

cites the upbringing of John Clare as an indication of what the child of "illiterate" parents might achieve[35]. (It transpires that Clare's father could read the Testament and enjoyed reading ballads and chapbooks. It would be interesting to know if he could sign his name).

It is, indeed, dangerous to generalise in this way and the implication that a kind of general diffusion of literacy existed in the 18th century is based on no firm evidence. The extrapolation of this belief and its implications are highlighted in the following passage quoted in full:

> "More generally, the long tradition of popular literacy made its impact felt on the development of the nineteenth century working class in three ways. First, the radical tradition from the London Corresponding Society through the Chartists and well after was deeply indebted to the religious and secular culture described earlier. Radical politics was predicated on widespread literacy and it is symbolically fitting that its earliest struggles involved the right to have a free press. But second, while nineteenth century working class politics was thus linked to the past, the new cultural meaning of literacy marked a discontinuity. It drove a wedge through the working class. It came, for the first time, to be a mark distinguishing the respectable from the non-respectable poor, the washed from the unwashed. It served to sharpen a division which was far less clear in the eighteenth century."

One of the problems, evidently, is to decide who or what is meant by the working class: it would seem that Laqueur is at one stage considering them as artisans and at another as all those who work with their hands for a living.

There is much research evidence, and we hope to provide more, that superior artisans have a history of literacy at least throughout the period studied, and judging from the work of Schofield, Cressy and others, long before it, and the "literacy wedge",as Laqueur calls it, must have been in position long before the 19th century. W.E.Adams, in writing of his childhood in Cheltenham c. 1840, shows that though among the poor the ability to read and write was considered remarkable there is no indication that this was a recent phenomenon[36].

Laqueur's work in the field of informal and other educational networks, particularly the growth and influence of Sunday schools, is of considerable value, but it constantly emphasises by its implicit lack of hard evidence the limitations of our present knowledge and methodology, for even having quantified to our satisfaction those groups able to write and probably to read, we are faced with the seemingly imponderable questions "What could they read?" and "What did they read?"

Two further points which need to be considered are firstly Laqueur's statement that female literacy improved at a constant rate between 1750 and 1850 and showed no sudden spurt in response to new schooling opportunities. Secondly, that the rate of growth in male literacy, from less than 30% in 1640 to 60% in 1754 , was considerably greater than the rate between 1754 and 1850 when 30% of bridegrooms were still unable to sign their names: from this he concludes that on the macrocosmic level educational innovation seems to have had no dramatic effect[37].

To take the second proposition first: the figure of 30% in 1640 is based on limited samples mainly derived from wills and Special Licence Marriage Certificates: it is almost certainly not representative of labouring groups and a true figure is likely to be lower. Secondly, the apparent low growth of literacy between 1754 and 1850 is considerably greater when considered in terms of population growth during ~~the~~ this period.

Although on a national level female literacy trailed behind male percentages until compulsory education and its widespread provision drastically changed this, the position in some counties, Gloucestershire being one, indicates that female literacy had overtaken male literacy before 1855 and the rapidity with which the graph lines converge leads one to suppose that provision of cheap or free schooling was a major factor. This will be considered in detail later.

Without doubt there are many indications, and we have found some, which suggest that informal networks operated: however, to deny the effect of school provision in many areas, especially after 1830, is to ignore a crucial factor.

It is true that attempts to show clear influences of the provision of schools on increasing literacy rates are subject to considerable difficulties and some local studies, notably that by R.J.Smith[38], show that no simple relationship existed between school attendance, as measured by the Education Census of 1851, and minimum literacy as measured by percentages of persons marrying who signed their names with a mark 1855-64. A minimum time lapse of 15 years might have been more productive perhaps, but one accepts the difficulty. However, W.B.Stephens shows that Radford, a large suburb of Nottingham included in Smith's analysis, experienced a population increase of 4,000 - 27,000 in the first half of the 19th century.

Our experience of the evidence from Bristol, which was well provided with schools[40], with the exception of two large parishes, is rather different, as will be described in the relevant section. In this respect one recalls the comment by A.E.Dobbs that the difficulty of organising a populous district increased directly with the growth of its population[41]. G.R.Lucas[42] shows convincingly the consistency of the growth of literacy in separate counties of England as taken from the Registrar General's figures published from 1841 and also deals with the influence of school attendance on subsequent patterns of illiteracy, using figures given in the Brougham Select Committee Report on the Education of the Lower Orders (1818), and the Education Census of 1851. He found that in counties with a good school attendance this was normally incompatible with high illiteracy a score of years later. He adds the caveat that the possibility exists that the relationship is not necessarily one of direct or even indirect causality, but with that reservation it appeared that the English counties and Wales, to a significant extent individually,

reflected in 1839 and 1869 the educational effort they had, as it were, absorbed 20 years earlier[43].

A considerably more sophisticated and detailed approach to the same problem has been effected by Professor W.B.Stephens in various papers.

In a comparison between the figures given in the Education Census of 1851 for 24 English towns and the Registrar General's figures for literacy in 1866 (15 years is usually taken as the average period between leaving school and marriage, though strictly speaking the average age for women marrying was in the 19th century as now lower than that for men) and also figures for neighbouring counties, he shows that there is not necessarily a relationship between the proportion of brides and grooms unable to sign their names in any particular town in 1866 and the proportion of children at day school there 15 years before. All that can be said is that there was a tendency, overall, for towns with high percentages of 'marks' to be places where there had been a low percentage of children at day school 15 years before[45]. Similarly there was a tendency for larger towns to have worse records and this was particularly true of large industrial northern towns whose parochial educational system had often been swamped by a rapid increase in population, mainly as the result of immigration.

Professor Stephens' interest in the importance of size of towns as a factor and their predominant economic and trading characteristics has been influential in this present study, particularly in analysing the literacy patterns of Gloucestershire; as he points out[46], illiteracy levels within counties varied considerably and some counties (Gloucestershire is a prime example) contain diverse areas - cities, towns, mining districts and farming communities.

Richard Aldrich in a recent brief summary of recent work in this field[47] stresses the importance of accurately defining what is meant by literacy in any given context. It is clear that what most students of 19th century mean by the term is quite different from its present connotation. Similarly it may be that our standard definition, i.e. the ability to write a signature, may, and probably did, mean different things at different junctures in the 19th century itself. Almost certainly, for example, the ability to sign a document in 1830 was more significant both as an index of status and education than that ability displayed in 1890.

His final exhortation is also salutary: he makes a plea that the most important answers to historical questions about literacy are likely to come from the historian's traditional and fundamental method of enquiry, namely a variety of sources taken in conjunction and the correlation of such information with that obtained from marriage registers so that the genuine dimensions of literacy will be defined and discovered.

Chapter I (ii)

Introduction

In the following sections we consider the various sources available to the student of 18th and 19th century literacy. The first, and most important, is undoubtedly the evidence of literacy from marriage documents. We have considered the validity of these and that of other sources which have proved productive and those which have not.

CHAPTER I (ii)

Evidence of literacy from marriage documents

Following Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act of 1753 (essentially a measure to reduce the number of bigamous contracts) signatures of the contracting parties were required from 1754 onwards. It was not until 1839, however, that these were required to be collected centrally by the Registrar General, who directed their publication beginning in 1841 and ending in 1900. They were presented as national figures and also grouped into counties, but at no time were they presented in any other sub-division, for example, in occupational groups.

Early publication was met with some incredulity: the first figures showed that 33% of males and 49% of females could not write their names, and it was assumed by many that this was an aberration which subsequent figures would correct. However, the figures, despite a gradual decline (in percentages of those signing with a mark) remained extremely consistent, particularly as regards male literacy, which shows no fluctuation throughout the period, as can be seen from the following:

Bridegrooms who could not write their names between 1841 and 1900

Year	England and Wales
1841	33
42	32
43	33
44	32
45	33
46	33
47	31
48	31
49	31
50	31
51	31
52	31
53	30
54	30
55	30
56	29
57	28
58	27
59	27
60	26
61	25
62	24
63	24
64	23
65	23
66	22
67	21
68	20
69	20
70	20
71	19
72	19
73	19
74	18
75	17
76	16
77	15
78	15
79	14
80	14
81	14
82	13
83	13
84	12
85	11
86	10
87	9
88	8
89	8
90	7
91	6
92	6

Table continued from previous page

Year	England and Wales
1893	5
94	5
95	4
96	4
97	3
98	3
99	3
1900	3

(48)

Clearly, these figures meant something but unfortunately no serious attempt at explaining the significance of a signature was made during the period in which they were collected, though in 1861 the Registrar General made the following statement:

> "If a man can write his own name, it may be presumed that he can read it when written by another; still more that he will spell his way through a paragraph in a newspaper." 49

The second proposition is less secure than the first; although we have no contemporary analyses to give empirical weight, we might suppose that these were considerably different skills. In addition 'a newspaper' is somewhat vague, as we should now think: for, as we shall hope to show later, newspapers both metropolitan and provincial had relatively high readability levels and arguably would have been outside the scope of many who could legitimately claim the ability to read.

The first proposition seems to be more acceptable: it might be supposed that a man or woman who could write his or her own name would be able to recognise or read it. However, in our searches in Gloucestershire marriage records we found some signatures which were only approximations to the intended name: for example those who wrote their two names as one: Ann New who signed as Annew, John Day as Jonday. If we assume that they would recognise their names when they had written them, can we assume that they could identify them when written (or printed) correctly by another ? The short answer is that we do not know and are never likely to, except perhaps in some particular circumstances where a number of collateral sources coincide. It is true that the number of instances of this kind is relatively few.

The use made by 19th century commentators and statisticians of these official figures needs to be considered. W.L.Sargant, in a much quoted article[50], used them to predicate the improvement between 1846 and 1868 of the general literacy of the people and the qualified success of the voluntary system.

Some points made by Sargant are of interest especially as they represent opinions of a contemporary worker. One somewhat odd proposal made by him is that a comparison of town registers with rural registers is not as conclusive as that of town with town, or of county with county.

> "In many town churches marriages are performed by the score, and little pressure is put on the signatories to induce them to write: in the country, marriages being comparatively few, the clergyman uses some persuasion to procure written signatures." 51

He adds that newly married persons in large towns were generally strangers to the church, whereas in the country they were known to the clergyman, who would urge their writing when they could do so and often urged it successfully.

Although Sargant gives no evidence for this, his opinion must be respected, though not necessarily accepted, particularly as most workers, including this one, have found towns in rural areas generally superior to their surrounding parishes in percentages of signatures.

Sargant also suggests reasons why towns might show higher figures: namely that couples living together unmarried were rare in rural districts but fairly numerous among the lowest people in the towns. Also that whereas the number of farm labourers who lived and died bachelors were few,

> "the lowest sort of people living in courts and alleys in towns who remain unmarried must be considerable. As these are likely to be the most ignorant of the population they would, if they signed, add to the signatures by most in the town registers." 52

Sargant considers that these pieces of counter evidence probably cancel out and do not appreciably alter the general balance, and that by comparing actual written signatures in the country and in most towns it would be possible to form a fair estimate of the respective education obtained ten or twelve years earlier.

Both are based on supposition, and both may have been true to a limited extent, but no recent work has indicated that even though cohabitation was markedly more present in towns and large cities than in the country, it

accounted for very substantial 'evasion' of enumeration by the Registrar General.

Sargant also goes into considerable detail to refute the belief that the agricultural labourer was noticeably worse off, educationally, than other workers; but this will be considered at a later point. Suffice it to say, at this stage, that his material is deficient here, since it is not enough to consider the condition of the agricultural labourer by an analysis of the returns of agricultural counties. Details of the literacy of the labourers themselves are necessary, and as noted above, the Registrar General's figures were never occupation specific.

Although Sargant compares educational provision and achievement in England unfavourably with that in America and Prussia, it is a fundamentally optimistic view. Another contemporary, R.W.Rawson, presents a less favourable view in considering criminal statistics[53]. It should be noted that his article preceded publication of the Registrar General's first figures in 1841. Rawson considered that there was no means of ascertaining how great was the proportion of those who, though able to sign their names more or less legibly and to read (or rather spell) through a dozen lines in as many minutes, had advanced to an extremely limited stage of instruction and were unable to derive pleasure or profit from this acquirement. Rawson feared that it might be even more extensive than the wholly ignorant class, and, as he asserts, that is what we are concerned with in education, not whether a man can painstakingly spell his way to reading a direction or the address of a letter but

> "whether he has sufficient instruction to enable him to understand what he reads, to allow scope to the imagination and the memory while he reads and to apply the information obtained by study to the practical purpose of self-improvement."

It may be seen that the Registrar General's figures are by no means definitive; but they present a valuable framework: mapping the slow but

steady improvement in a basic standard of literacy, though hiding all kinds of inequalities, fluctuations and variations at a microcosmic level.

They are also valuable in making comparisons between different countries and were used as an objective, if limited, index of disparities in educational provision and ethos between England, Scotland, Prussia, America and Switzerland, usually to the disadvantage of the first-named.

Valuable though these statistics may have been, they are unable to tell us much of what historians want to know and hence they are a starting point for micro-studies rather than any kind of definitive statement.

Variations in literacy between denominational groups

It is frequently stated by some researchers that members of Nonconformist sects were more literate than their Anglican counterparts. Professor Stone, for example, puts this forward strongly. On a priori grounds one would accept this as a reasonable proposition: sects which gave centrality to the written word, the Methodists for example, implied by their numerous publications by no means confined to Holy Writ (cf. John Wesley's 'Primitive Physic') a reading membership. And contemporary accounts like those of Lackington show the evangelising enthusiasm of young Methodists not only to convert others to their beliefs but also to share their literary skills.

However, to obtain objective confirmation of these beliefs is no simple task. Methodists continued to be married in Anglican churches long after the period covered by this study, and it is not possible to separate these without independent, collateral evidence. Even then the work of tracing names from membership lists to marriage registers would be a considerable task for what would probably be a numerically small result. One of the clear impressions given by membership books in the Methodist Archives in the New Room, Bristol, is that a high proportion are tradesmen, or come from artisan or professional groups. As will be seen in Chapter 4, section vi, weavers were believed to be largely Dissenters. Our researches into education in Bristol have shown that British schools (though not catering exclusively for children of Dissenting parents) by their higher fees and moderately liberal curriculum provided for children of parents in a higher stratum than the labouring poor. What may very well be true, then, is that Nonconformity appealed directly to certain artisan groups, their affiliants and tradesmen, and these, as we hope to show later, reveal high rates of literacy from at least the middle of the 18th century.

While there may be a general truth, then, in the supposition that Nonconformists tended towards higher literacy, some of this supposition may

be based on error. The Society of Friends and Jews were accorded the concession of solemnising marriages independently from the established Church at an early date. Following the hypothesis that Quaker marriage certificates would indicate higher literacy rates than Anglican ones, W.L.Sargant[54] wrote to the Registrar General, with whom Quaker records are deposited, asking how many Friends signed their marriage certificates with a mark. The Registrar General replied that he had examined 750 registers and found no marks. Sargant concluded, not unreasonably, that this indicated a remarkable degree of literacy for the 18th and early 19th centuries of this denominational group and included this in his much quoted article. This statistic appears to have passed into the mythology of literacy studies and is still frequently quoted. It seemed remarkable that in years when some of the marriage registers of Bristol and Gloucestershire have marks in excess of 60% this sect should have none. Accordingly, this was pursued at the annexe to the Public Records Office. The first three Quaker registers, including Frenchay Meeting from 1790, showed no provision for the bride and bridegroom to sign and they were not signed. Their names and usually the names of a large number of witnesses were neatly written in a single hand, presumably that of an Elder. In fact, the Registrar General's answer to Sargant's question was accurate but he failed to understand the significance of the question.

This negative piece of investigation does not, unfortunately, tell us much about the true state of Quakers' literacy, except that it was probably not the 100% rate claimed for it during the period in question. It is highly likely that inasmuch as it recruited mainly from professional groups and those engaged in trade or industry, as today, literacy would have been high, but from the evidence available we cannot claim to know this.

Armed Forces: Statistics of Literacy

Although the Army was concerned to collect statistics relating to the educational standards of recruits, particularly after the Crimean War, there appears to be no practicable way in which recruits from specific counties can be identified and their educational accomplishments assessed. Correspondence with various historians specialising in military recruitment corroborated this: Colonel Peter Reese found that attempts to evaluate the literacy of troops from Discharge Documents deposited at the PRO showed little result for weeks of effort[55]. Likewise in my examination of description books of the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Gloucestershire Regiment: the 28th and 61st Foot respectively in the PRO there was no information of educational standards in the description books; besides which a large proportion of recruits appeared to be of Irish origin. It was clear, at an early stage, that this was likely to be an unfruitful source of enquiry. However, some of the published statistics relating to the Army and Navy are of interest as a guide to the rapidly improving educational standard of recruits from the middle of the 19th century onwards, and the increasing importance, particularly, of recruiting men who as non-commissioned officers could handle accounts and communications with some facility. Before this time no educational provision was made for the soldier's needs because its relationship with military training had never been appreciated. Not surprisingly, therefore, the vast majority of soldiers, in the opinion of a recent commentator, were completely illiterate. The following table is an indication of the increased standards which the Army were able to expect, and which reflected, perhaps, exterior developments as much as educational provision within the service.

Classes	1859		1868	
	Actual Number returned	Percentage	Actual Number returned	Percentage
1. Can neither read nor write	30,261	20.5	16,010	9.46
2. Can read but not write, or can barely sign their name	26,667	18.8	17,924	10.59
3. Can read and write	79,399	56.0	124,893	73.80
4. Have a superior degree of education	5,271	4.7	10,387	6.14

(57)

We know from the same source that, increasingly, though progress varied between regiments, promotion to non-commissioned officer was conditional on passing a written examination. As will be seen later in the sections concerned with occupational-specific literacy, although few non-commissioned officers marrying in Gloucestershire before and including 1855 were unable to sign their names, the majority of private soldiers were in this condition.

We also have statistics concerning recruitment to the Navy and Marines at approximately the same time i.e. 1867:

	Total Acquirements reported	Read well	Read Indifferently	Not at all
Petty Officers	8,382	6,246	1,669	487
Per cent.		74.51	19.90	5.59
Seamen	27,051	16,471	7,571	3,009
Per cent.		60.89	27.98	11.13
Marines	15,451	7,865	4,875	2,711
Per cent.		50.90	31.55	17.55
Boys	6,424	4,472	1,884	68
Per cent.		69.61	29.32	1.07
Total	57,308	35,054	15,999	6,255
Per cent.		61.17	27.92	10.91

(58)

Although the educational categories are different from the Army statistics illustrated above, it is interesting to note that the overall percentage of naval personnel able to read well is 61.17% and the Army category of "Read and write" is 73.8%. In 1868 80% of males in England were able to sign the marriage register[59].

There are indications, though difficult to quantify, that educational standards in the Navy were higher than those for the Army. Some MS. letters from sailors (or on behalf of others circa 1810) to parents and relatives will be considered in Chapter 5 of this study, and it is interesting to consider the relative communication skills of their writers.

The Admiralty in its Naval Dockyards at Portsmouth and Plymouth was certainly a demanding employer and those seeking work there were required to pass written examinations in English and Mathematics. These are described in some detail by P. Cumin HMI in his educational comparison of two Maritime Districts[60].

It is extremely rare in the 18th and 19th centuries to find officers of either of H.M. forces unable to sign their marriage certificates, though an

example occurs in the Leckhampton marriage register for 1845 of an officer in the Royal Navy who signed with a mark rather than a signature: but he may have been physically disabled[61]. Though producing some incidental points of interest, then, the attempt to learn more specifically about literacy in Gloucestershire and Bristol was not advanced by this approach.

Medical and Hospital Records

The same may be said of medical and hospital records, for although some commentators consider these a possible source, given the tendency of Victorians to assess educational standards of any captive audience, searches made particularly at the Burroughs Wellcome Museum and Library revealed no such remains, nor any references to such data.

Police Qualifications

As a consequence of the reform of the borough police between 1835 and 1856 higher educational qualifications were required[62], and this may be illustrated by part of an advertisement in a provincial newspaper for 1856 from the Chief Constable of Dorset.

> "No person will be appointed who is under 22 or over 35 years of age, or under 5 ft. 8 in. in height, or who has more than two children dependent upon him for support. No candidate will be admitted who cannot write and read writing." 63

The importance of a constable's ability to read handwriting is obvious, but it is interesting that this specific requirement should need to be emphasised. It is reasonable to suppose that after c. 1840 no police constables would be illiterate and certainly this was the case for members of the regular constabulary and the railway police who appeared as bridegrooms in our Gloucestershire and Bristol samples.

This is one of many occupations which increasingly, as the 19th century progressed, called for higher standards of literacy. Additionally, the inability to write a signature or read could debar adults from other potential advantages. The most important of these (largely based on reports and

rulebooks c. 1830 rather than proven practice) was the requirement of intending members of early Co-operative movements to be able to read and write.[64] It is not known to what extent this rule was invoked and as it does not appear on any but the earliest rulebooks it may have been discontinued[65]. If, on the other hand, it was rigorously applied, it would have had the effect of debarring large numbers of labourers and their wives in Gloucestershire and other predominantly agricultural counties and would have been an early example of large sections of the poor being denied trading advantages organised by artisan groups.

The Validity of Prison Records

Although it is not possible to attribute exactly the originator of the proposition that ignorance was the begetter of crime, a desire to support or disprove this claim lay behind much of the anxious collection of prison statistics in the early 19th century. Perhaps the most extensive of these compiled by W.Rawson and published in 1840[66] was one of the many findings which suggested that educational standards were even lower than researchers had feared at their most pessimistic. Contemporary observers and later students have found little difficulty in dismissing the uncorroborated evidence of these records; their position may be summarised by R.K.Webb:

> "Criminal figures seem to be no accurate index to the literacy rate, however convenient or appalling they may be." 67

The main grounds for doubting their value are the nature of the data itself and the atypical section of the population from which it was gathered.

On the first count it is worth considering the means by which prison officers arrived at their categories of R & W; R Imp; Not R or W; R not W, etc. Mayhew described prison admission procedure in detail on several separate occasions. His description of the arrival of prisoners at Pentonville shows procedures which are, on the one hand subjective and judgemental, on the other hand indicative of more methodical and objective analysis. In the first the prison doctor asks of a new convict, "Can you read, my man ?" (The facial angle of the man's head showed him to be a man of low intellect.) "No, sir," was the answer, "but I know my letters." "And he will never know anything more," added the medical officer in an undertone, when he had dismissed the prisoner, "for he is one of those men we often get here that no teaching on earth could instruct."

"Do you find the convicts generally persons of inferior understanding ?" I asked.

"Generally speaking, I should say certainly," was the cautious reply.

"There are exceptions, of course; but as a body, I consider them to be badly developed people."[68]

However, the schoolmaster at Pentonville, a Mr. Wilson, supplied Mayhew with an analysis of the educational standards of the selectively-based school classes . These were:

		%
Class 1 -	those who can read and write well and cypher as far as the rule of proportion	14
Class 2 -	read and write well and cypher as far as compound rules	6.75
Class 3 -	1st sub class (can work simple rules of arithmetic)	17.75
	2nd sub-class (learning simple rules of arithmetic)	41.75
	3rd sub-class (able to read, write or cypher only imperfectly, or not at all)	19.75
		100.00

(Sample: 400)

(69)

Extensive statistics for Clerkenwell Detentional Prison for the year ending September 1860 also suggest that even if the tests given were purely verbal, the degree of differentiation suggests that reasonably clear parameters existed in prison officers' minds.

	Male	%	Female	%
Neither read nor write	1281	23.97	697	32.55
Read or read and write imperfectly	3414	63.91	1301	60.77
Read and write well	557	10.43	113	5.28
Superior instruction	90	16.85	30	1.40
	5342		2141	

Elsewhere Mayhew quotes extensive statistics covering the ten years from 1839 to 1848. He notices the small variation in the figures mainly as evidence of the minimal effect of education either in or out of prison. However, with the benefit of hindsight, we notice that at a time when educational provision was either stagnating or, in large urban parishes, being overwhelmed by numbers, the consistency is a striking suggestion that the figures were not arbitrary inventions of prison officers concerned to process prisoners as efficiently as possible. In other words, they are likely to mean something, though perhaps not always what they seem to mean. If we could determine more exactly what officials and, ultimately, prisoners, meant by being able to read and/or write then considerable accumulations of statistics, so readily discounted by some workers in this field, might yield useful insights.

There are strong suggestions from prison surveys other than Mayhew's, notably James Hole's "Light More Light"[70], from statistical surveys and from the records of prisoners committed for trial at Gloucester Assizes in the first half of the 19th century that the majority of prisoners and prison officers would agree on the minimum standards: unable to read or write (as distinct from ability to distinguish letters) probably meant exactly that. It is possible that in some circumstances a committed prisoner might prefer to keep his accomplishments, however slender, to himself. For example one Richard Hicks who was sentenced to six months' detention in 1830 (for a machine-breaking offence) described in the Assizes Register as 'unable to write' was able to sign his name when he married in 1824[71]. As Dr. Frayling has suggested, he may have felt it politic to hide his skill in order to avoid the more serious charge of writing threatening letters. Alternatively either he or the prison official may not have regarded the ability to inscribe a signature as entitlement for that category.

Generally speaking, however, it seems probable that both enumerators and interviewees in this period would have regarded the ability to sign their names as qualifying them to count as "able to write". James Hole[72], in his detailed analysis of returns from Leeds Gaol in 1853, distinguished between the categories of those described as able to write as follows:

	%
Unable to write at all	47.81
Could write their own names and no more	23.32
Capable of writing a letter	26.53
Good writers	2.33

and this suggests that the minimum attainment which qualified as writing was the ability to inscribe a signature. If this was so, then even if the testimony were a verbal one, an officer would have little difficulty in checking this: a man either could or could not sign his name. It is possible also, though there is no specific evidence for this, that prisoners taken into custody were required, as today, to sign for personal belongings confiscated from them on admittance. These minimum standards have therefore, it is suggested, a reasonable degree of objectivity and one would expect greater uniformity in this category than any other, since qualifications like 'imperfectly' and 'well' indicate greater subjectivity.

In assessing prison statistics we are usually presented with raw figures which, whatever their degree of reliability, are likely to reflect a wide spectrum of age, occupation and geographical derivation. Few attempts to analyse these figures, apart from categorising them as adults and juveniles, appear to have been made. However, an advantage of a relatively small geographical target area means that, where primary source material is extant, it is possible to look in greater detail at the educational attainments of prisoners and group them by occupation and age, and ensure that the data

relate to those living within a county area at the time of arrest. Clearly, this latter does not necessarily mean that they are indigenous in origin, but this is highly probable, at least until 1850.

The present study has such a source, namely the admission and description books relating to Gloucester Assizes from 1812 to 1844. In addition to name, physical characteristics, alleged offence, names of witnesses, and conduct in custody, the registers give the occupation, parish of residence, and for the majority of the period, the educational attainments, in reading and writing, of the prisoners. Other important information is the verdict at trial and subsequent sentence. Consequently it is possible, if one wishes, to separate convicted prisoners from those who were discharged, i.e., by definition, criminals from non-criminals. Although a full analysis of these data would require considerable resources and preferably some computer assistance, it is possible, using smaller samples, to make some interesting and perhaps helpful statements concerning the standards of literacy of some of the groups of prisoners, and this will be attempted in Chapter 4.

One obvious, but important, element which can be extracted is the largest occupational group, that is, the agricultural labourer. We can then compare their standards of literacy, as recorded by prison officers, with the overall figures for Gloucestershire labourers extracted from marriage records in parallel years. We would hope that there would be some agreement between them: if not, then either the arguments of those who dismiss prison statistics in this field as arbitrary and largely meaningless may be strengthened, or we may have to reconsider the arguments of 19th century prison reformers and educationalists concerning the relationship between ignorance and crime.

If, however, we are able to establish a reasonable correlation between the literacy of labourers in custody and at large in Gloucestershire at a point in the 19th century it will provide a fixed base upon which, in time,

further detail may be constructed.

The degree of interest shown by writers and reformers in prison reform and causes of criminality in the 18th and 19th century has left us with some material which can be of help in assessing the literary tastes and capabilities of prisoners. Mayhew and various Commissions have provided us with extensive lists of books which were at least available in prisons, and some interesting light is thrown on tastes and attitudes by the kind of books which prisoners requested and were refused.

Prison statistics (and especially those from the metropolitan districts), by themselves, are likely to give a distorted impresion of national patterns of literacy, one obvious reason for this being that, numerically, the labouring class whose educational attainments were lowest were predominant at least in early 19th century custodial proceedings. However, for researchers whose target is this lower end of the educational spectrum, the material, provided it can be made discrete, is most valuable,for it is possible to make connections between other data which, combined, provide stronger evidence than has been available in the past.

Summary (Chapter I part ii)

We have seen that on a national level there is a consistency concerning the advance of literacy as measured by marriage signatures which is unlikely to be the result of chance. It is worth remembering that this increase was taking place against a rapidly expanding population, consequently the improvement is even more remarkable than the surface percentages suggest. Some contemporary and modern commentators have disputed these figures on the supposition that large numbers who illicitly cohabited avoided enumeration by this means, and that this substantially affected the statistical returns, particularly as they related to large towns. There is little evidence in our figures for Bristol and Gloucestershire that this happened on a major scale. Discrete parishes of the cities of Bristol and Gloucester show a clear differentiation in literacy levels and as will be seen in Chapter 3 the clear correlation between the results of a statistical survey and the marriage records of our paradigmatic parish, SS. Philip and Jacob, suggests that even in the poorest area of a major provincial city the majority of 'heads of families' had been officially married and thus enumerated.

It appears that the condition of the agricultural labourer regarding literacy was far worse than some contemporary analysts had indicated. Their generalisations, as in the case of W.L.Sargant, were based on deficient data. In Chapter 4, by extracting discrete data concerning the literacy of agricultural labourers from marriage and prison records, we hope to present a more objective record of the educational state of the agricultural labourer in 19th century Gloucestershire.

We have seen that there is insufficient evidence for the belief that members of some denominational groups were appreciably superior in respect of literacy to others in the broad Protestant tradition. It may have been so, but we have shown the alleged superiority of the Quakers to be based upon a misconception. Unfortunately in this area it is easier to produce negative

evidence than positive and a major difficulty for any researcher is to obtain sufficiently reliable and numerically acceptable data.

Army and naval statistics for later periods in the 19th century indicate the improved educational standards of recruits. However, Army records do not appear to give details of individual educational accomplishments of enlisted men and so are of no value as further collateral evidence. Similarly, hospital records do not appear to reveal any helpful evidence of literacy levels.

On the other hand, there is a considerable volume of statistical material relating to the literacy of prisoners and although it may be difficult to relate this to the literacy rates of the nation as a whole much of it has a remarkable inherent consistency. Where this material can be analysed into discrete occupational groups it may be seen to offer collateral evidence to corroborate that of marriage records, and Chapter 4 iii considers the Gloucestershire data in detail.

CHAPTER 2

Educational Provision in Bristol

(i) Introduction

(ii) Provision of Elementary Education in Bristol 1810-1870

(a) Curriculum: Aims and objectives
(b) Curriculum: Content

(iii) Sunday Schools

(iv) Teacher Training

(v) Religious controversy and popular and clerical attitudes towards education

Chapter 2

Introduction

From a consideration of the validity of various measurements of literacy we turn to our first main case study: the provision and impact of education in Bristol. This chapter attempts to trace the growth of elementary education and the effects of rivalry between Anglican and Nonconformist sects in the main period of voluntary endeavour, 1800-1870. It also considers the growth of the Sunday School movement in Bristol and the early history of Bristol's first teacher training college.

Although a number of monographs and dissertations have been written on individual educational institutions and aspects of education in Bristol, there is no extant study which draws these elements together. This attempt to do so is primarily an introduction and background to the central theme of the dissertation, namely the quantification of the results of educational forces before the existence of objective tests or testing.

The work for this chapter was undertaken as historical exploration rather than as substantiation of any theses: but there were hypotheses underlying the search. The first of these was that schools founded by Nonconformist sects would be more likely than those founded by the established Church to emphasise the importance of the individual and be less concerned to consider education as a process of social control. Another hypothesis which follows from this is that the curricula of Nonconformist schools might reasonably be expected to be more innovatory.

Subsidiary objectives include the necessity to determine the average length of stay for pupils in elementary schools and, where possible, the occupational status of their parents. Another objective is to consider the proposition that the teaching profession in the 19th century was depressed: we have attempted to examine the training and working conditions of teachers in Bristol during the

voluntary period. As a subsidiary to this we considered it important to analyse the occupational background of teachers in training in the hope that this might indicate patterns of recruitment and, incidentally, throw light on their educational background.

A further objective was to consider the provincial repercussions of the religious and political dissent concerning education which were operating at a national level. It is our contention that the rivalry had little direct effect on those citizens who used the schools and in Bristol had the effect of stimulating educational provision.

Initially, before considering some of this material in detail, we include a descriptive background of the historical and economic conditions.

CHAPTER 2

(i) INTRODUCTION

Educational Provision in Bristol

Background

In the 17th century Bristol had some of the most generously endowed schools in England, but by the 19th century many of these had fallen into desuetude or had been the victims of a rapacious City Council.

It is worth considering the fate of some of these schools in order to understand the educational climate during the earlier part of the period in question[1]. The Free Grammar School, founded in 1532, supported a master with an annual income of £70, but he felt, and was apparently under, no obligation to teach any pupils. A similar situation obtained at Queen Elizabeth's Grammar School, founded in 1571. Neglectful governors had allowed the income to dwindle until by 1836 it was reduced to £21 and the school had no staff or pupils. The Cathedral supported a choir school, but this consisted of only six children. Colston's Hospital, founded in 1708 by the Bristol merchant and philanthropist, was perhaps the most successful. Here 96 boys were taught, fed and lodged and, at the appropriate age, apprenticed to a master.

Other institutions were less fortunate, the most notorious of these being Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, founded in 1686, and generously endowed with land and property in and around Bristol. Its founders had nominated the City Council as trustees, and by 1836 the annual income of the charity had reached £4,000. However, a large proportion of this was deducted, at source, by the Council for payment and compound interest on an alleged loan a century before. Consequently the school, which should have been one of the wealthiest in the country, could barely support the 44 boys and one master at a salary of £50[2].

Various benefactors had made provision for the education and care of girls, and the most notable of these was the Red Maids' School in Denmark Street. Others were Ellbridge's school for 30 females, a school in St. Mary Redcliffe parish for 21 females who were taught reading, writing, sewing and knitting, and the Clergy Daughters' School (1833) for 30 children.

Although by 1800 Bristol was somewhat static educationally, there was a tradition of liberalism remaining from former times. As early as 1745 the Bishop of Bristol, Joseph Butler, preaching in the Cathedral, considered tha anomaly of those who were apprehensive of the danger of educating the poor while not appearing at all apprehensive of a similar danger to themselves or their children[3].

75 years later there were many who echoed the views being expressed throughout the nation, "We must either build more schools or build more gaols."[4] The Bristol riots of 1831 gave fuel to this belief, and numerous pamphlets were published and circulated. Although this was different in origin from many similar outbreaks in the North, commentators were quick to note that most of those who were tried and condemned were illiterate.

As no figures were readily available at that point in history, they were not to know that perhaps as many as 40-45% of their fellow citizens were in a similar plight[5].

One particular pamphlet cited the prominent causes as Ignorance, Disunion and Want[6]. The author makes a plea for infant and nursery schools, schools for mutual instruction, parochial libraries, and Mechanics' or Labourers' Institutes with apartments for reading and lectures. These, he asserted, were matters which the Government should assist, and their failure to do so alienated the people. He claimed that the clergy had been the opponents or lukewarm friends of any extension of general knowledge. "They have, in many instances,

forgotten to exalt the humble and meek, and break the yoke of ignorance."[7]

There is a fervour about this document which is impressive even at this distance in time; the author, in common with so many of his contemporaries, knew, basically, what was needed. Unfortunately the pamphlet is anonymous; unlike the work, less fervent but still extremely impressive, of the Bristol Statistical Society, which produced four valuable reports, two on education, two on the condition of the poor, in the same decade. As we shall see, few knew the extent of the problem, and the statistics when revealed often appalled the statisticians[8].

With the possible exception of its reformatories, one does not think of Bristol as being particularly innovatory in terms of education. However, it had one of the oldest public libraries in England (17th century), and one of the oldest theatres (18th century). It also had an infant school rather advanced for its time, founded by D.G.Goyder in Meadow Street, the precursor of a number of schools in various parts of the country[9]. This owed a great deal to the methods of Pestalozzi, whose work, in print, the author had evidently studied. The curriculum included marching of an apparently complex nature, use of pictures ('The Resurrection of Lazarus' being one), writing and the teaching of mathematics with inch cubes. There were also wooden blocks which could be used for building toys, castles and such like. Goyder enjoyed his teaching, and although there are strong overtones of training in obedience and humility, one gets the impression that the children enjoyed it also. Unfortunately no other records or admission books of this school exist.

It should be noted that Bristol had a very large number of private schools giving a classical and general education. Very few records of these remain: a few letters in the archives, some prospectuses and

frequent, but repetitive, advertisements in the newspapers. Some of them may have been as good as they claimed to be; many had good libraries, a relatively wide curriculum and men of genuinely able and enquiring minds at their heads. Judging by two letters written to J.Whittaker from Dr. Estley's school on St. Michael's Hill not only was English effectively taught, but the personality of the writers had not been stifled[10]. Robert Southey and Charles Kingsley were at school on the same hill, though not at the same establishment, early in the century.

Although numbers of children were employed in various industrial processes, there was not the same demand for child labour as in the northern mills or even the coalfield of South Gloucestershire. In the latter many of the seams were eighteen inches thick and could only be worked by small children[11]. In Bedminster children worked in some of the mines, but usually in tasks such as adjusting ventilation in the galleries. Dr. Stewart found the youngest eight or ten years old, and that hours of work varied between eight and ten a day but sometimes as much as thirteen.

Wages and conditions varied considerably. In the South Gloucestershire coalfield, apart from the difficulties of working narrow seams, corporal punishment was used and children's wages could be as low as 3d or 4d a day. In Bedminster there was no corporal punishment, but lateness or refusing to work resulted in dismissal. Wages could be as much as 13s.8d. a week for boys of thirteen, as much as some men could earn as labourers in Bristol. There appears to have been no shortage of labour, and judging from evidence from marriage registers from 1837 onwards, sons followed their fathers into the pits.

In Bristol itself the main trades which employed children were glass manufactories, potteries, pipe manufactories, button and comb-making, wire-working, horsehair weaving, willow-weaving, lace-making, book folding and

stitching, soap boiling and tobacco processing. A considerable number of girls were employed as cotton winders in the factory of Messrs. Naish, who produced a patented sewing cotton. Most of the tasks were repetitive and the hours were long, but most of the children were not in physical danger. The exceptions were those who were employed in lead and spelter works and others working in match factories. Some were employed in iron-works, where the most common accidents were contusions from blows or heavy weights: "partial amputation of the fingers is apt to occur through carelessness in serving some parts of the machinery."[12]

Mr. Waring only visited two establishments in Bristol, and judging from his acceptance of conditions in the South Gloucestershire coalfield, one must take his findings somewhat cautiously. He found no children under twelve years of age, and gained the impression that the employment of very young children was generally discouraged by the trade of the district. Wages varied considerably: from 1s.0d. to 12s.0d. for boys (weekly) and from 2s.6d. to 7s.0d. for girls.

It would seem that there was not the degree of exploitation of the young in Bristol which Lord Ashley had reported in other parts of the country[13], but from the evidence of schoolmasters and others, large numbers of children were employed as errand boys or in household duties. An errand boy could earn between 2s.0d. and 3s.0d. a week and this would have been an acceptable supplement to the family income when the average rent in the poorer quarter of Bristol was, in 1839, 2s.1¾d.[14]

Mr. Waring obtained various completed questionnaires from some of the factories which he did not visit and these convey some indication of the educational attainments of the children employed in them. These give rather different figures from those obtained by his own observations. In a locomotive works in St. Philip's, for example, 80 boys under 13 were employed,

the youngest being 10. Wages were 2s.0d. to 6s.0d. per week, and a working day was twelve hours, less 1½ hours for meals. In another locomotive works in St. Philip's the youngest boy was not quite eight years old. In the Bristol Cut Nail Co. in Wilder Street there were 13 boys under thirteen and these are described as a rather unmanageable set, liable to strike for higher wages when there was a greater demand for their labour. This despite a fairly high attendance at Sunday School, whose merits Mr. Waring extols.

In general terms, his impressions were that those working in the factories were superior in intelligence and responsiveness to those of the same age working in collieries. This was based on superficial appearance rather than on any regulated tests. Unfortunately he gives no figures for the degree of literacy of the child-miners he interviewed, but evidence to be considered later suggests that they remained educationally underprivileged well on into the century.

Bristol, like many large cities in the nineteenth century, wrestled with problems of poverty, overcrowding and disease. In an extensive survey of the conditions of the working classes encompassing 5,981 families, it was found that 556 shared part of a room and 2,244, or 37.5% of the whole, lived in one room only[15]. 43% of the dwellings had no water supply or a very poor or deficient one. Although 80.9% of houses had privies many were placed in the communal, in many cases the only, room[16]. A mere 15.7% of the familes were depositors with savings banks or benefit societies; only 51% of heads of families claimed to be able to read and write (more or less) and 29.3% were considered to be dirty and disreputable or in considerable distress.

25.6% of the sample had suffered smallpox, but the majority of the children, 92.9%, were considered to be healthy. There had been a serious cholera epidemic in 1832 and a map drawn later shows clearly how the main outbreaks were concentrated in the densely overcrowded parts of the city[17].

We have no details of the expenses of a typical Bristol labouring family, but one criterion of domestic economy is available in Mulhall's Dictionary of

Statistics 1884, in a table which shows the standard of living of a Bristol tradesman's family at different points in the century. This is a useful guide when considering teachers' salaries as well as labourers' wages.

	1792	1823	1845	1883
	£	£	£	£
Rent	10	15	18	20
Clothing	10	12	12	15
Bread	20	21	20	16
Meat	10	14	20	28
Groceries	10	15	20	22
Sundries	10	13	15	19
Totals	70	90	105	120

Mulhall's figures for the Average English Labourer and Mechanic are:

	LABOURER			MECHANIC		
	1792	1823	1883	1792	1823	1883
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Bread, meat, etc.	16	17	20	18	20	22
Groceries	2	3	5	4	6	8
Rent	2	3	4	3	4	6
Clothing, etc.	7	8	8	17	22	24
	27	31	37	42	52	60

(18)

The later survey of 1884 lacks numerical evidence, so that it is difficult to establish any pattern of progress over the forty-five years. Much improvement in drainage, street paving, isolation of infectious diseases and other sanitary reforms had been carried out, but there still remained extreme conditions in the ancient city. By that time the merchant and commercial classes had left the city centre and moved to the suburbs of Clifton, Cotham and Redland, and their visits down the hill to St. Philip's parish, for example, even in the last quarter of the century were looked upon as missionary expeditions.

What is interesting is that after the Bristol Riots of 1831, and it is worth remembering that Bristol and Kingswood had a reputation in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries for rioting, there were no more outbursts of this kind, despite the plight of many of its inhabitants, especially in periods of trade recession. The belief, apparently prevalent in the early nineteenth century, that the Great Revolution would begin in Bristol proved groundless.

It is against this background, then, that we attempt to consider and analyse the provision of elementary education in this area.

Chapter 2 (ii)

PROVISION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN BRISTOL 1810-1870

(a) CURRICULUM: Aims as Contained in Official Documents

The aims of the various bodies which concerned themselves with education inevitably reflected those of their main parent bodies, the National Society and the British and Foreign Society. However, there are regional differences and there are adaptations which throw light on their aspirations and difficulties. In addition there were changes in emphases as the century progressed. It should not be forgotten that there were some leading citizens who were opposed to sectarian education much earlier than that stance became fashionable.

C.Bowles Fripp was one such. Part of his report of 1841 makes a strong plea for the Government to improve the character and status of the schoolmaster, and then to establish at State expense well-qualified teachers wherever schools could be established. Otherwise, he maintained, although we might attain a population that could read and write and who would be technically acquainted with every form of religious truth, we should look in vain for minds trained to independence of thought[19].

This prescient paragraph is another reminder that there were men in public positions who had considered the possibilities of elementary education with care. All too rarely, it seems, did the voluntary system make use of them. But the majority believed that the provision of necessary facilities should be the province of the Church or Churches and, as elsewhere, this philosophy and distrust of state interference were strengthened as the success of the voluntary system increased.

The reports of the societies and schools are not necessarily entirely reliable guides to the intentions of their committees, for they are usually accompanied by subscription lists and solicitations for continued support. Consequently they may well be written with a view to what the subscribers

wished to hear. However, various deductions may be made.

The Clifton National School was founded in 1811 and its report for 1812 contains numerous references to the increased docility, dutiful behaviour, respectful submission and unimpeachable integrity which their parents had received and their employers could hope for. Such education, it was affirmed, would also teach children allegiance to their King and cheerful obedience to other existing authorities; they would consequently be less likely "to fall a prey to the designing and disaffected"[20].

A later report makes it clear that it was not the intention of the school "to raise the poor above the station in which the all-wise Providence has placed them, but to make them humble, contented, and useful in it."[21] Presumably there were many wealthy people living in Clifton who believed, like the owner of Dyrham Park, that

> "the world is allready oer taught. Manuel labour is lost in so much reading and writing and if the lower classes could not read what is now so much published it might be happier for them." 22

The appeals to subscribers frequently have a slight edge of menace beneath them; the suggestion that unless such schools were allowed to thrive, anarchy, irreligion and republicanism would overwhelm the State. Another veiled threat which was held out was that as a result of unremitting exertions by other denominations of Christians for the religious instruction of the lower orders any remissness on the part of Clifton National School and its subscribers could have the effect of alienating children from the institutions and ordinances of the apostolical Church[23].

There is, then, a continual reminder to those who paid the bills that their money was serving various functions: redeeming souls and giving basic education and training in humility which would make children subservient and industrious. However, despite the advantages supposed to accrue to the subscribers as well as the beneficiaries, balancing the bills was a difficult task. As the century continues, the tone of the reports changes, and the

emphasis on social control diminishes.

Education as conceived by at least one National School had no place for upward social mobility; if such doctrines had breathed from the reports, one suspects that subscriptions would have dropped sharply. The report of the 1818 General Meeting of the British and Foreign School Society quotes with approval a statement by the Bishop of Chester deploring any tendency of those engaged in trade or agriculture to discourage the instruction of the lower classes, for, he claimed,

> "with few exceptions those early instructed in religious principles are beyond comparison the best servants, the best mechanics and the best labourers." 24

The report of 1841 speaks of an education which will prepare children for "the situations in which they may hereafter be placed": a subtle but important distinction from the wording which constantly appears in National Society reports, "those humble stations which the providence of God has appointed them to". Although the main aims of the two societies were similar, the social aims of the British Schools left a little room for manoeuvre.

CURRICULUM: Content

Subject-matter, methods and attainments as derived from Inspectors' Reports and Log-books

In the National School at Clifton the aims were limited to reading and religious education and, on payment of a further penny, writing. The report of the Diocesan Board of Education for Bristol in 1844 noted that in addition to the usual subjects, in Bristol elementary instruction in geography, English grammar and history was given, and further advance made in arithmetic and mental calculation[25].

In the British Schools the curriculum was similar, with geometry, drawing and vocal music in addition at the Dings School. The Friends' School was more ambitious, having regular science lectures for the children and members of the First-Day (Sunday) School. From 1850 the school also had a small library, and though no elementary schools in Bristol prior to 1850 concerned themselves with physical education or recreation, the Friends' School made a feature of long afternoon walks[26].

All of these schools were committed to religious teaching, but the quantity and quality of this varied considerably. At the Friends' School each day began and ended with a reading from the Bible.

In many schools, particularly the Anglican, the Priest-in-Charge or curate regularly taught Scripture, and so at St. Augustine's, for example, a regular visitor was Canon Henry Moseley, formerly H.M.I. Unfortunately there are no records available concerning his views of the state of elementary education in Bristol[27], though it is apparent that he was not favourably impressed by the standards in this particular school. A later entry records that in a preliminary inspection carried out by him, the results were found to be not at all satisfactory, especially in Standards IV and V[28].

The stated curriculum is a poor guide to what was actually taught. The log-books demanded by the Revised Code are a source for knowledge of the

curriculum after 1862 which is difficult to uncover prior to that. Even these, though, are an incomplete record, as relatively few survive and entries tend to high-light the unusual or punitive aspects of school life. Few schoolmasters, even then, had the disenchantment or honesty to record day after day as Mr. Whyman at St. Augustine's School did, "Nothing out of the usual monotony"[29].

Specific Bristol Schools

Clifton National School

The boys at Clifton were constantly visited by clergy, but also by gentlemen in Clifton who were presumably members of the Committee. This benevolent patronage was extended to provision of soup in very cold weather and dinners for children whose fathers were out of work during trade recessions. The master evidently disapproved of most seasonal festivals, and as all log-books testify, they helped to swell the number of absentees, sometimes to the point where only half-a-dozen children remained. Some seasonal events, though, like November 5th, gave him an opportunity to warn of the dangers of letting off fireworks in the street and to direct their attention to the blessings which they enjoyed as subjects of a Protestant Queen[30].

This master rarely referred to subjects taught or methods used, one of the few exceptions being a description of his drawing a ground plan of the school on the blackboard. The children were apparently very much interested. On another occasion he gave a lesson on the eclipse of the sun when one occurred. Apart from these the only noteworthy curricular activities were lessons given by a former pupil-teacher who gave two lectures on photography.

The discipline appears to have been poor, although the reports vary. As the Reverend J.R.Byrne pointed out, the master had an almost impossible task in the instruction and management of 150 boys or thereabouts, assisted

by only one pupil teacher. The latter, as can be seen in many school-logs, was frequently absent through sickness.

The master either did not punish severely or omitted to record punishments, but as late as 1884 another master recorded the fact that he was trying to abolish corporal punishment. Judging by many of his comments in the admission and leaving register, his relationship with pupils was not good. The majority of comments are of a pejorative nature, which is true of the Register from its earliest date (1816). Few of the parents were living in the destitution of families in parts of the city. Only occasionally was inability to pay the pence given as reason for taking a child away. Nevertheless even here payment of pence was a problem with some.

Payment of fees and average length of attendance at Clifton National School

In 1854 it was recorded that a mother had only 10s.0d. a week to support five, and therefore could not pay the pence. In addition there must have been many defaulters or, alternatively, the average attendance was lower than the reports suggest. In 1821, for example, the annual boys' pence was £16.0s.8d. The average number of boys was stated as 189. Assuming a working year of 45 weeks and that each child was only paying 1d. we get an average of 85. If, as is probable, some proportion, perhaps 50% of those, were paying another penny for writing, that reduces the average size of the school still further. By the same calculation in the previous year the average size of the school would have been 55, whereas supposedly it was 169[31].

It is possible to calculate the average length of stay in this school for a pre-1850 date. In the year 1840 104 boys were registered and their average age at entry was 7 years 10 months. Their average stay in the school was 23.35 months, or just under two years. Many stayed for periods as short as three months, while some remained for seven years[32]. Some of the reasons given for leaving give insight into parental attitudes towards education and also tell something of the conditions in the school. A boy of eight cannot bear the fatigue; another was obliged to take his father's meals to Clifton and

so could not come so far to school (1853); one mother said the child could not stand the noise (1855), further evidence that many monitorial schools were very noisy places. One boy of eleven left as he had no mother and was employed at home taking care of the children and getting their meals ready (1863). Large numbers of children were kept at home to 'nurse', presumably looking after younger children while both parents were at work. Many left to go to other schools and at least seventeen of these are mentioned in the records; some of these were superior schools like the Trade School, Colston's or the City School; others were infant, private or elementary schools. Of the latter at least two were Nonconformist: the Lancasterian School (British) and Hope Chapel School (Congregational). The fears of the writer of the report that other Christian sects might encroach were not unfounded.

Achievements and Reports: Clifton National School

It is possible to make some assessment of such a school from the reports of H.M.I.s, general though they tended to be. The Inspector of 1868, for example, reported very good reading and writing throughout the school; questions in Holy Scripture answered with remarkable readiness; boys attentive, orderly and well-behaved. A different Inspector in 1869 remarks that the discipline is as efficient as can be expected with the present inadequate staff of teachers. However, a year later the same man reports that discipline is still strictly maintained. Two years later another Inspector made a visit of surprise, and found the master away and the school in uproar[33].

Without standardised written tests it is difficult to know what achievements were, but the following throws a little light. Two boys, John Ridler and George Westlake, were pupils at the National School for 14 months and 5 months respectively. When they came to marry in the Parish Church of Clifton they both signed with marks; neither married an illiterate wife[34].

Educational State of a Sample of School-leavers from Clifton National School

Entry and Leaving Dates	Name	Literate at time of marriage	Wife literate	Father's Occupation	Comment in Register	Dubious
Age 7 April 1829 Left Aug. 1830	Rogers, William	✓	✓	Labourer	Distance too great Probably went to school elsewhere - later employed as a victualler.	
Age 9 Oct. 1829 Left April 1833	Pidgeon, Joseph	✓	✓	Mason Employed as mason at time of marriage.		
Age 7½ April 1828 Left May 1830	Waterman, James	✓	✓	Dead	Errand boy in Clifton He may have returned to school before becoming a servant as employed at time of marriage.	
Age 11 April 1832 Left June 1833	Ridler, John	✗	✓	Labourer	Employed with father	
July 1832- Oct. 1835	Davis, William	✗	✓		A bad boy - much absent Not positively identified as the same William Davis	??
Age 9 Oct. 1833 Left Feb. 1834	Westlake, George	✗	✓	Seaman	Long Absent	

Clearly, this is too small a sample to be significant, on the other hand it is interesting to see that an eleven year old boy could spend 14 months at school yet be unable to sign his name 10 years later.

St. Augustine's National School. Inspectors' Reports

The other Anglican school in the sample is St. Augustine's National, founded in 1849. Extant records begin in 1863 and these contain repeatedly poor Inspectors' reports. In 1863 reference was made to the necessity of stricter discipline and order; grants in full were made with considerable hesitation. In 1865 the Inspector reported that the boys were rather less noisy and disorderly, but there was a need of a firm hand in the administration of discipline and a proper earnestness and perseverance on the part of the master. As a result of continued failure in Discipline and Instruction the grant was reduced by one-tenth. Evidently this finally moved the managers to action, for the next entry records the commencement of a new master with the numbers standing at 75[35].

These very unfavourable reports were all the result of scheduled visits as opposed to 'visits of surprise', and it is a reasonable inference that on many occasions the school was very disorderly indeed. P.Cumin makes the point in his report that he was struck with the contrast between a National School on ordinary days and the same school on the day of inspection. He points out that it would be as unfair to judge a school from such evidence as to judge the costume of the English people from their dress on Sunday. In his inspections he made a point of giving no notice of his arrival, and felt that other Government Inspectors should do the same[36].

Another point of interest is that several years and several strongly worded reports were allowed to pass by the managers, but the reduction in the grant of one-tenth, though probably a matter of a few pounds, seems to have given the spur to action. Inspection with sanctions, however mild, was clearly more effective than inspection without. The first report on Mr. Whyman showed that he had improved the discipline and raised standards of work and attitude of the younger boys. The upper classes, however, had still not recovered from the negligence of their former master: their spelling and

ciphering were poor and they were backward in other respects[37].

Surprisingly, because St. Augustine's (the Cathedral parish) was not noted for its unruliness, this appears to have been a difficult school, besides which Whyman often had to cope with 100 boys with only one pupil teacher. The latter appears to have been a constant irritant to Whyman, either, for example, because he was neglecting his duties in order to read a "foolish tale book", or behaving in a childish or untrustworthy manner[38]. His academic standards were also low; Whyman records that on one map of England several towns were placed outside the outline of the country. C.T.Griffiths, the pupil teacher, received equally unfavourable reports from the Inspectors and ultimately his indentures were cancelled[39]. A feature which emerges from this and many log-books was the difficulty of securing good pupil-teachers.

Whyman also records threats to himself. After thrashing one Fitzgerald he was told that the next time he did it the boy would heave a chisel at him[40]. Most of the entries lack signs of educational flair, though, and there are frequent references to monotony, and unfortunately no indications that he did much to vary it. The impression of a disillusioned teacher emerges from these pages.

Several entries record visits of Canon H.Moseley, usually in Whyman's absence. Both from these records and from those of Clifton National School one deduces that absences of the master were quite frequent; if an inept pupil-teacher was sometimes left in charge of a school of 100 boys, it is likely that little educational progress was made at such times.

The premises were, apparently, adequate, but the personnel for one reason or another found the difficulties considerable: lack of pupil teachers or inefficiency of those available, fluctuating numbers, and rowdiness of pupils contributed, at least in the years 1862-1870, to a low morale.

Managerial Attitudes to Teachers

Some evidence of managerial attitudes to teachers is available from the SS. Philip and Jacob Day School Minute Book dating from 1862, when the schools were completed. A Mr. Richards was appointed at a salary of £74 and undertook to pay all other teachers necessary to the effectual working of the school provided the school capitation grant was given up to him[41]. Two years later he was offered a revised salary structure, namely £40 per annum and half the capitation grant and half the school pence instead of the fixed salary of £70, and he was requested to consider the same and to give his answer to the secretary within one week[42]. In fact he accepted, and for two years all appears to have been well. In January 1866 the Committee decided that the newly-formed night school should be under the same master (a Mr. Vernon had been appointed) as the day school, and resolved that Mr. Richards should be given three months' notice unless he resigned[43].

Clearly one does not know the background to this particular situation; Richards may have been inefficient and this may have been a convenient lever to remove him. As it stands, though, it suggests a peremptory and high-handed attitude of the Committee which accords with other attitudes towards schoolmasters of the time.

In the event, it seems that Richards did not resign and was not dismissed, so presumably he made his case sufficiently strongly for the Committee to relent.

British Schools

From National Schools we turn to British and other Nonconformist schools in Bristol. These were never as numerous as the Church-supported schools, but it is worth remembering that some of them were built exclusively for the poor of any denomination and not intended for members' own children, and that they were concentrated in areas of particular social deprivation, the unwieldy parish of SS. Philip and Jacob being one.

Baptist Street Wesleyan School

Baptist Street Wesleyan School, for which records exist from 1864 to 1898, appears to have been a tightly-organised school, despite its apparently inconvenient design. There was, for example, only the flimsiest partition between the mixed school and the infants; also the closets were inadequate and often filthy. The curriculum here seems to have been basically the same as elsewhere but various exceptions show that rather higher educational aims were pursued than normal: for example, Mr. Kernick, the master, gave lessons on the effects of the Roman Invasion, a lesson on poetry, introductory to a biographical course of the English poets, geography lessons on Lapland and the trade-winds, and on the imports and manufactures of England. He allowed children to choose their own poems to learn, and elicited good work from them: a map of the East Coast of England which had been done at home being described as particularly good[44].

Surprisingly perhaps, the annual inspection of 1868 gave a rather lukewarm account of his work, saying that he had conducted it for 14 months with fair success amid great difficulties. His successor was rather more traditional but he was evidently concerned to deal with relevant and interesting material. He gave lessons, for example, on the eagle, the manufacture of paper, the eye, and the Franco-Prussian war. His methods, also, were mildly innovatory: in dealing with spelling he would choose one boy out of the class, and the others could ask him any word which they knew how to spell themselves. The boys enjoyed this very much: an effective way of dealing with an elementary chore.

However, again, the Inspector's report of April 1870 was not complimentary concerning the attainments of the children.[45]

It is interesting to speculate whether such a curriculum, assuming that these examples are representative, which emphasised interest, choice and

participation, would produce results easily assessable by the traditional viva voce examination of this time. Matthew Arnold, who inspected schools in 1852 in Bristol, did not, unfortunately, report on this one. Bearing in mind his constantly expressed antipathy towards rote-learning and resultant incomprehension, it would have been interesting to see his reactions to a slightly less traditional curriculum.

In his 1852 report on Bristol he makes a general point about Wesleyan schools, namely that their high fees, sometimes as much as 8d., must exclude the poor[46]. (It is interesting to note that the Reverend H.W.Bellairs in his report of the same year was arguing the reverse.) He appealed to them to throw wider the benefits of their exemplary education. Although Baptist Street Wesleyan School was in a poor locality the fees were over 3d. (exactly how much over is not known), and some children left as a result. The effect would have been to make the school somewhat selective, and children would probably have come from homes where a curriculum not confined to the basics would have been acceptable.

There are no references to corporal punishment in this school, but it is not known whether it had been abolished. Nonconformists, generally speaking, were opposed to physical punishment: Highbury Congregational School abolished it shortly after its foundation in 1851, and the Friends' schools were totally opposed to it.

The Friends' Day and Evening Schools

The Friends' Day and Evening Schools, Cutlers' Hall, Bristol, were established in 1847 for the instruction of boys of the poorer classes. The curriculum included reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, Scripture lessons, geography, history, mental calculation and linear drawing. Payments of the children were 1d., 2d. or 3d. per week according to the circumstances of their parents: an early example of a sliding scale adapted to parental income. As already noted, lectures on science were given to the boys from 1847 and a note

of thanks in 1864 acknowledges a valuable present of models illustrating mechanical forces.

Initially, the methods of staffing were unusual for the time. This was partly because the first superintendent, Francis Hunt, gave his services without payment, and he was later assisted by four junior teachers. This meant that there was a better pupil-teacher ratio than in comparable schools, and it also avoided the monitorial system. This had the benefit, according to the first annual report, that direct adult supervision improved the standards of instruction and moral training[47].

It also meant very cheap schooling, as it was being subsidised by free labour. In 1847 the cost per head was 7s.6d.; in 1848 11s.6d. In 1849 the Superintendent retired and the Committee adopted a retrenchment policy. They reduced numbers, and adopted the British, monitorial, system. The cost per head rose to 17s.9d. in 1850, with the children paying an average of just over 2d. per head per week.

As in the annual reports of Clifton National Schools, the appeals for continued or increased support sound an ever greater urgency of tone as the years go by, and 1853 brings an ultimatum: notwithstanding an application for Government aid, more help from subscribers would be needed, otherwise the establishment would have to be closed.

The application for Government aid does not seem to have been successful; it is not clear why. Perhaps the Friends were unable to bring their buildings up to minimal standards, a hazard which seems to have affected Nonconformist schools more frequently than Church-supported schools. Costs continued to rise and in 1860 education was costing £1.1s.11d. per head, just under half of which was paid by the child. As in the Clifton National School, the turnover of pupils was considerable. In 1863 there was an average attendance of 304 and a leaving list of 262. Of these 80 left for work; 102 were dismissed for non-attendance and inattention; 9 for non-payment; 55 for

other schools and 16 for other reasons. The report adds that this can partly be accounted for by the scarcity of employment and prevalence of disease.

The disruptive effects of such coming and going can hardly be calculated, and yet it does not appear to have been untypical of this period. One theory advanced at the time was that children stayed at good schools for a shorter period of time, presumably having mastered the rudiments of literacy and numeracy[48].

Highbury Schools, Durdham Down

Another British School, founded in 1851 by the Congregation of Highbury Chapel and built in Anglesea Place, Durdham Down, suffered from its proximity to a National School built on the edge of the Downs in the same year. This area, later comparatively affluent, was as late as 1884 classed with low areas of the city in terms of social deprivation, and the Highbury Congregation had built the school here to serve a community mainly composed of quarry-workers[49]. The school was built for a little over £1,000, and was to give a great deal of trouble in terms of accommodation, ventilation, poor lighting and sub-standard sanitation throughout its history. Consequently, when application was made for a grant in 1868, various expensive alterations were demanded before it was forthcoming. That such an apparently shoddy building should have been erected is somewhat surprising when one remembers that the deacons at the time included several leading businessmen and an eminent builder. In contrast, the National School was a somewhat distinguished building of red Durdham Down stone designed in cottage ornee style by C.Fripp and having houses for master and mistress at either end.

The poor conditions at Anglesea Place may have contributed to the rapid turnover of staff, although Deacons' minutes show that David Thomas and his colleagues went to some trouble to secure the best men from Homerton, interview and appoint them. The curriculum included reading, writing,

arithmetic, geography, English grammar, history, drawing, singing, "and such branches of general knowledge as may be suited to their capacities". The girls were to be also instructed in needlework[50]. Over the years the results of this school seem to have been good, and the annual meetings and prize-giving ceremonies were duly reported in the local press.

We know that corporal punishment was abolished early in the school's history[51], and the then schoolmistress resigned in protest[52]. The schools were to be visited once weekly by a member of the Committee appointed in rotation. Although the boys' masters stayed for short periods of time, a Miss Bamford stayed for 20 years and appeared to be a stabilising factor. The records of St. Matthias Training College show that an application for training from Miss Bamford was considered, although the Committee advised her to try elsewhere as well. It seems unlikely that she entered the College, but it is interesting to see that a Tractarian Training College was prepared to entertain an application from a Nonconformist, as she presumably was.

The charges made were 2d. for the first course of instruction, 3d. for the second course, whereas at the Church school the fee was probably 1d.; this was probably the cause of dwindling numbers, particularly on the boys' side. In 1854 it was finally decided, in Committee, not to give notice of dismissal to Mr. Stocks, but to urge upon him the necessity of making exertions in order to increase the number of pupils. At a later stage, in reply to the Committee's request for advice on the subject of his salary, he volunteered to accept a fixed annual payment of £50 plus the boys' pence instead of the £75 as at that time. Assuming a fee of 2d. per boy and an average attendance of 45 weeks, this would have meant retaining an average of 66 boys to maintain his salary. This, increasingly it seems, became a method whereby numbers could be kept up and some standards maintained before the Revised Code came into operation. Undoubtedly it put a considerable strain on the operator of such a system;

£75 compared unfavourably with many workers, but £50 per year was scarcely a living wage. Significantly, perhaps, Mr. Stocks resigned shortly afterwards and the search for a suitable master began again.

The school does not seem to have been innovatory, but this is difficult to ascertain, as the log-books are no longer extant. As in most schools in Bristol, there are records of visits to the Zoological Gardens, but there is no indication what use, if any, was made by Mr. Stocks or others of Durdham Downs, rich in common and rare flora. He does, it is true, request from the Committee copies of books illustrating the leading principles of Natural Philosophy, but it is not known what use was made of them.

Supply and Quality of Teachers

Until the work of the training colleges was well established, the problem of finding suitable staff was acute in Bristol, particularly among male teachers. No doubt this was a national problem; as W.F.Lloyd, Secretary to the Sunday School Union, said in evidence to the Report on Education of 1834, answering the question "Do you happen to know ten good teachers unemployed?": "I do not think there are any thoroughly good teachers unemployed, but there are a great many indifferent ones now employed because the conductors cannot get better. I think 500 thoroughly good teachers, if they were adequately encouraged, could obtain instant employment; but if teachers are to have the wages of porters or ploughmen, you will never get fit persons for teachers."[53]

At a later stage, following the Revised Code, and benefiting from the products of the training colleges, trained and effective teachers did appear but the inference to be drawn from many log-books is that the comparatively low wages (the West of England paid lower wages than London, the South-East and the North), unreliable assistance in the form of pupil-teachers, and a curriculum geared to essentials, had either a deleterious effect on their morale and health or led to a very limited average stay.

Shortly after the implementation of the Revised Code, H.M.I. J.R. Rice Byrne commenting on schools in Gloucestershire recommended raising the rates of payment, the main reason being that it would increase the income of the school and thus the quality of education by raising teachers' salaries[54]. H.M.I. Bowstead reporting for non-Church of England schools in Gloucestershire noted that teaching staff in most schools was being seriously diminished both in numbers and efficiency[55]. One of the effects of the Revised Code was to encourage managers to employ only as many pupil-teachers as would supply the conditions of the public grant. Paid monitors were cheaper, and where only reading, writing and elementary arithmetic were taught, they could be made tolerably efficient[56]. Although these strictures applied to the rural areas of Gloucestershire rather than the cities, it is clear that the Revised Code did nothing to improve the status or conditions of teachers.

In the previous decade Matthew Arnold had remarked on the serious amount of ill-health he had found among female pupil-teachers. He reminded managers of schools that the physical qualifications of those who presented themselves as candidates for apprenticeship required careful observation, and that the duties of pupil-teachers were such that a mere delicacy of constitution, without any positive infirmity, would unfit a girl from discharging them without great risk. Arnold advised the Committee of the Council of Education that it could not be too strict in guarding against the admission to apprenticeship of sickly children, boys as well as girls, because intelligent as they often were, they would always lack many qualities which a teacher should never be without.

In addition he noted when examining pupil-teachers towards the close of their apprenticeship, when they were generally at least 18 years old, the disproportion between the great amount of positive information and the low

degree of mental culture and intelligence exhibited. Though often having the minutest knowledge of grammar and historical, mathematical and geographical facts they often could not paraphrase a simple piece of poetry or prose without misapprehending it. Too little attention, he felt, had been paid to this side of their training, the side through which it "chiefly forms the character" and the side which, perhaps, had been too exclusively attended to in schools for the higher classes.

He recommended reading of the best English authors and composition which would elevate and humanise a number of young men who, though they had amassed much raw information, remained totally uncultivated. It would have the added social advantage of tending to bring them into intellectual sympathy with the educated of the upper classes[57].

Arnold's commendably idealistic programme for pupil-teachers does not often, at least in the Bristol experience, seem to have been realised. As we have seen, frequently pupil-teachers were scarcely more responsible or mature than their pupils, and their rate of absenteeism similar. Consequently, school masters were sometimes left with 100 or more children to teach with only one teacher; as one noted in the log-book: "Very hard work and I should not do it only I hope it is not for long as I hope to have another apprentice ere long."[58]

Chapter 2 iii

Sunday Schools; their Educational and Social Effects

One of the most interesting educational developments in the nineteenth century was the growth of the Sunday School movement. In Bristol this was dominated by the Nonconformist sects: in 1836 the Established Church had an average attendance each Sunday of 2148 with 156 teachers. Of the Nonconformists, the Wesleyan Methodists had an average attendance of 2580 with 622 teachers, and the remainder of the Nonconformist sects 3808 children and 620 teachers[59].

The aims of the Sunday Schools were clear: to teach children for the most part ignorant of the Christian truths the essential dogma and to teach them to read the Bible. Nonconformity took a lead in this form of education and the records of Broadmead Baptist Church give some idea of the early impetus; in 1801 there were four schools in poor districts of Bristol founded largely by women of the congregation who had made the condition of Bristol children a serious study[60].

The Methodists opened their first school in 1804 and had 17 by 1815. The Congregationalists frequently started Sunday Schools which grew into Day Schools, but this was more expensive. One of the advantages of the Sunday School, at least as a limited form of education, was that it required no special buildings or paid teachers. Consequently, operating costs were very low: the Methodist Sunday Schools in 1815 with 2,586 children in attendance cost a total of £193.13.7¼d., of which about £100 was subscribed; a mere 1/5d. per child annually(61).

Sunday School teaching, though voluntary, was not a casual duty. Attendance figures in most of the churches for men and women were high, and in the Society of Friends absentee or unpunctual teachers were disciplined. The methods were not casual either. The Friends' First-Day School in Wilder Street had a carefully devised system which left little to the discretion of the teacher. There were 70 children and 7 classes, carefully graduated. Only

children who could read well were admitted into the first class and here further education was by catechism of a kind familiar to readers of educational histories[62].

At a later date Friends' Sunday Schools also taught writing, and H.M.I. Cumin commends this in his report. He noticed that the school room was very well filled and the scholars most attentive. On expressing admiration of their quietness and diligence he was told that this was the effect ot their being allowed to write[63]. Although the Friends' First-Day School seems to have been exceptional, its pupil-teacher ratio was not. The average ratio suggested by Fripp's 1836 figures is 1:6 and even allowing for the fact that not all teachers attended each week this would still probably mean a ratio of 1:10. (A random month's figures for Highbury Chapel in 1886 shows the ratio to be 1:7.9.)[64] Children were coming into close contact with adult men and women, often of considerable cultivation and talents. The cultural effect of this is difficult to evaluate, but is likely to have been great. Conversely, the contact with underprivileged children probably taught their teachers to look wider than the policy of laissez faire and casual charity. Sunday School teaching has been regarded by some as a form of condescension, but judging by the Bristol experience it was a very real service which brought about an enlightenment which led to various schemes for social improvement and amelioration. The story of the Sunday Schools operated by Highbury Chapel is not necessarily typical, but each week a large proportion of the congregation, including industrialists like W.D.Wills, went to various parts of Bristol to teach children who were filthy, foul-mouthed and sometimes violent. From these, day schools and, later in the century, mission centres providing all kinds of amenities,developed[65].

There were critics of the educational pretensions of the Sunday Schools, including leading Bristol Churchmen. Canon Girdlestone, Dean of Bristol, felt that their provision cloaked the educational deficiency, and David Wardle

asserts that the vast number of amateurs engaged in Sunday Schools in England (estimated at 318,000 in 1851) helped to keep the teaching profession in its chronically depressed state throughout the nineteenth century[66]. Fripp's figures for 1836 would lend support to this contention. He shows that of an estimated 14,717 pupils, the following proportions and numbers were being taught at Day and Sunday Schools.

	Scholars	%age of Population	%age of Total Number
Attending Day or Infant Schools	3,609	3.20	24.52
Day or Infant and Sunday Schools	1,645	1.46	11.18
Sunday Schools only	9,463	8.42	64.30
Totals	14,717	13.08	100.00

This shows clearly that a very substantial proportion of children owed their education to the Sunday School and without them educational provision in Bristol at this time would have compared unfavourably with towns of similar size, as another of Fripp's tables shows:

	% of Total Population			
	BURY	MANCHESTER	LIVERPOOL	BRISTOL
Day and Infant Schools	13.1	10.46	12.81	4.66
Sunday Schools only	15.5	11.58	1.62	8.42
	28.6	22.04	14.43	13.08
or:	1 to 3.5	1 to 4.6	1 to 6.9	1 to 7.6

(67)

As Fripp pointed out, these figures revealed an unsatisfactory state of affairs, but there is little evidence that if Sunday Schools had not partly filled the gap, there would have been a massive injection of capital to supply Bristol's educational needs.

P.Cumin, in his report, gave his impression that a particular section of the population sent their children to Sunday Schools; those who could not afford to dress them decently would not send them[68]. However, there were ragged Sunday Schools as well as Ragged Day Schools, and it is interesting to see that until 1850 most of the Nonconformist Sunday Schools were situated in the poorest parts of the city.

There are reasonable grounds for supposing that as a measure of social control the movement had some effectiveness. The Friends' First-Day School exercised rigid discipline, although forbidding the use of corporal punishment[69]. If a boy were to behave so badly that neither loss of marks nor rewards had the required effect, then he underwent a minor form of disgrace; a final sanction, for obstinate resistance to authority, would be expulsion.

Some employers insisted on their juvenile labour attending a Sunday School, so strongly were they impressed by the value of its moral teaching. One proprietor of a printing firm made it a sine qua non of admission to large numbers of boys and girls employed in folding and stitching books[70].

The educational achievements of the schools are difficult to estimate, although there were the obvious advantages in having their limited horizons widened by Sunday School outings and other activities. Nonconformist activity in this sphere roused the ire of sections of the Established Church who claimed that a species of bribery was employed to parents in the form of tea-drinkings, reward tickets, etc. to win pupils away from Church schools.[71]

Chapter 2

iv Teacher training in Bristol. Fishponds Diocesan College: later the College of St. Matthias

Proposals to found a college for training schoolmistresses had been made as early as 1838, but it was not until 1849 that decisive steps were taken to carry out a recommendation made by a previous Bishop of Bristol[72].

One of the prime intentions of the college was to produce mistresses for country parishes, but in fact many of the early students were from towns in the West of England, as the following list indicates. There are no records of an entrance examination, so presumably entrance was judged by school reports, interview and the obligatory recommendation of a clergyman.

The majority of students had been educated at National Schools, but a few had been to private schools and some had been educated at home by their mother or father. Parental occupations show that the majority of girls came from families the heads of which might be described as skilled artisans or engaged in trade or commerce; of the first 58 girls only 3 had parents whose occupation was described as labourer.

Entrant	Parental Occupation	Place of Origin
1	Schoolmaster	Faringdon
2	Farmer	Swallowfield, Reading
3	College Servant	New Inn, Oxford
4	Builder	Great Tew, Enstone
5	Coachman	Oxford
6	Baker	Highbridge
7	Ship Porter	Bristol
8	College Servant	Oxford
9	Gardener	Gloucester
10	Floorcloth Weaver	Bedminster
11	Sawyer	"
12	Sawyer	"
13	Butcher	Bristol
14	Labourer	Clevedon
15	Gardener	Faringdon
16	Printer	Baptist's Mills
17	Custom House Officer	Bristol
18	Farmer	Newbury
19	Farmer	Llantrisant
20	Shopkeeper	Trowbridge
21	Mason	Bridgend
22	Coachman	Upton St. Leonard
23	Coachman	Pucklechurch
24	Mason	Penzance
25	Widow	Oxford
26	Labourer	Sherborne
27	Soldier	Bideford
28	Carpenter	Castle Cary
29	Shoe Manufacturer	Northampton
30	Forge Agent	Abergavenny
31	Gardener	Mortlake, Surrey
32	Shoemaker	Stoke, Bucks.
33	Saddler	Chagford, near Exeter

Entrant	Parental Occupation	Place of Origin
34	Scythe Grinder	West Howbridge
35	Saddler	Brackwell
36	Carpenter	Bromyard
37	Farmer	Backwell
38	Schoolmaster	King's Bromley
39	Commercial Traveller	Bedminster
40	Plasterer	Langport
41	Lawyer's Clerk	Walworth
42	Farmer	West Moreton
43	Blacksmith	Shepton Mallet
44	Organist	Bath
45	Widow	Totnes
46	Blacksmith	Woodstock
47	Jeweller	Oxford
48	Butcher	Ilchester
50	Station Master	Yate
51	Shipwright	London
52	Grocer	Morecambe
53	Saddler	Solihull
54	Carpet Manufacturer	Kidderminster
55	Baker	Oxford
56	Butler	All Souls', Oxford
57	Custom House Official	Waltham Abbey
58	Labourer	Pontypool

Curriculum and Standards

The early prospectus shows that the principal subjects taught were Instruction in the Holy Scriptures, Articles of Liturgy of the Church of England and other subjects usually taught in good National Schools, together with vocal music and linear drawing. Secondly, the students spent about one-third of their time in the practising school; and, thirdly, a part of every day was occupied in household work, students taking their turn in the kitchen and learning to prepare plain dishes. It was hoped that this would help them to direct their future homes.

Canon Moseley, who had been instrumental in preparing in 1855 a new syllabus for training colleges, was probably responsible for its implementation at Fishponds. The curriculum concentrated on practical subjects such as English, Arithmetic, History, Geography, School Management and class teaching as well as the teaching of reading, spelling and penmanship. Although many of the students were destined for rural parish schools, this does not seem to have been reflected in the curriculum; there is no indication that natural history or elementary husbandry were taught[74].

At various times in the history of the College, Inspectors commented unfavourably on the health of the students. Certainly there was little provision for recreation or extra-curricular activities to relieve the rigorous days, and although the diet appears to have been adequate it was based on a recurring weekly schedule. As shops were out of bounds, there was no opportunity for students to vary their diet themselves.

A report by the Acting Medical Health Officer in 1868 commented on two cases of typhoid at the College, resulting in one death. In addition there were numerous digestive disorders, largely accounted for by the short time of meals - that being 15 minutes[75].

Probably some of the ill-health was due to the condition of students on admission, there being no medical examination, and it is quite clear that the

regime and the physical conditions were not suited to students of lower than average strength and resilience. In his report of 1858 H.M.I.Cook, in commenting on the ill-health of the students, mentioned that the Government would in future require a return as to the health of students at entrance and at the completion of each year[76].

H.M.I.Cook's successor, the Reverend E.D.Tinling, continued to comment adversely on the health of the students, urging the necessity of exercise, recreation and medical supervision[77]. He also recommended that the students should bathe more regularly, though failure to do so seems to have been the fault of the facilities rather than laxity on the part of the girls.

This background of ill-health may in part account for the comparatively low academic standards of students at Fishponds. In 1859 H.M.I.Cook drew attention to the inferior quality of some students and the lack of sufficient teaching power. He recommended the appointment of another lecturer, for although the College had not yet reached its full complement, by 1860 there were 60 students in residence[78]. H.M.I.Tinling in 1866 found that the reading of the students was weak, but the Principal informed him that many students on admission knew very little of reading or even of the common words in use[79]. In 1868 he reported on hearing students read and those in the second year give lessons. Of the latter, three were below fair, and the reading was not good in either year[80]. In the following year he observed that the reading of the second year was indifferent, 6 or 7 being below fair, and he drew attention to the fact that Pupil Teachers were receiving inadequate instruction[81].

The tabulated report by the Reverend F.C.Cook for 1858, reproduced opposite, shows that the Bristol and Gloucester College had the second highest rate of unclassified First Year Students, Truro being the highest. If we translate Mr. Cook's grades into figures, giving 6 for V.G. down to 1 for M, we have the following table of results for first year students in 1858:

College		1st Year		2nd Year	
		Total	Position	Total	Position
Bishop's Stortford		51	7	59	10
Brighton		46	10 =	60	9
Bristol and Gloucester		46	10 =	57	11
Cheltenham		61	2	68	1 =
Derby		50	8 =	63	5 =
Home and Colonial		58	4 =	63	5 =
Norwich		57	6	61	7 =
Salisbury		58	4 =	64	3 =
Truro		45	12	-	-
Warrington		60	3	61	7 =
Whitelands		66	1	68	1 =
York and Ripon		50	8 =	64	3 =

(82)

From this we can see that in these Diocesan Colleges, Bristol and Gloucester held a low position at this time; penultimate in the first year, ultimate in the second. When we allow for the fact that Truro Training College was in its infancy, the position for Fishponds appears even worse. The late Mr. Elmes puts the case in his thesis that it was the Revised Code which lowered the standard at Fishponds; but these figures and reports already quoted would suggest that the standard had never been very high.

In the report of the examination results of 1864 we see again that first year students were substantially below the average for "Excellent or Fair" in a number of subjects, namely: Bible, Catechism and Liturgy, Reading and Repetition, Spelling, Penmanship, and Domestic Economy, though they were above average in Arithmetic, Grammar, Composition and Needlework.

One might infer from these figures that the governesses had tended to concentrate on essentials and ignore peripheral subjects, and as early as 1857 H.M.I.Cook had drawn attention to the comparative unimportance given to Geography and History in the curriculum[83]. Again, it seems that the best subjects as shown by this examination were those most susceptible to teaching and industry, with certain exceptions, and that the particular weak spots, particularly reading and spelling, might be attributable to the quality of the initial intake. It is surprising that Biblical and liturgical topics emerged poorly under examination, because considerable emphasis was placed on these by its predominantly Tractarian founders.

The comparatively low standards of attainment of the students at St. Matthias, Fishponds, cannot readily be explained. It is probable that the older and more successful Anglican College at Cheltenham attracted the more able, and as has been seen, the generally poor health, lack of amenities for recreation and amusement contributed to a low morale which affected work adversely.

It would appear from successive admission registers that in the first twenty years of the college's existence the background of the students remained similar to that of the first intake; skilled artisans, superior servants, tradesmen or those engaged in commerce. As stated above, only 3 of the original 58 students had parents in the category of labourer. From our studies of the literacy of occupational groups at various stages in the 19th century we should expect these groups to possess a reasonable degree of literacy, and it is clear from the original register that some parents were sufficiently confident of their skills to teach them to their children.

It is somewhat surprising, then, to read some of the comments of the early inspectors of the college and particularly the rejoinder of the Principal in 1866 to H.M.I. the Reverend Tinling's criticism of students' reading that many, on admission, knew very little of reading or even of

the common words in use. Although anecdotal, this throws interesting light on the standards of would-be teachers who, arguably, would have been among the more proficient in the basic skills of reading and writing of the groups from which they derived.

The students at St. Matthias were subject to all the customary restraints of their age in residential educational institutions, but even allowing for the conditions of the time the treatment of these 18-20 year olds seems unnecessarily restrictive. They were not, for example, allowed to visit shops and they were expected to be in bed, and silent, at 9 p.m. From the Reverend Tinling's report of 1865[84] it may be inferred that the rules were not, or could not be, rigorously enforced, for he noted the importance of checks being made on their walks and notice being taken of any that were absent. He also recommended that students should go to bed at the same time and should have supervision in the dormitories. In the following year he noted that the moral tone of the students was lower than he expected, there being much theft and deceit[85].

Throughout this period (1853-1870) there appears to have been considerable petty theft in the College, but the Committee of the Council felt that, however necessary it was to maintain a high standard, occasional delinquencies must be expected among such a number of persons[86]. Possible sanctions against students were limited and this is reflected, perhaps, in the Principal's continual appeals to the Council for disciplinary guidance.

During the first eighteen years of its existence the Diocesan College underwent two major staff crises. The first, within a few months of the opening of the college, resulted in the resignation of three members of staff who evidently found that the restrictions and compulsions imposed upon them were inimical to their sense of reasonableness or justice. The second, which resulted in the dismissal of two senior Governesses popular among the students,

produced some unrest among them and a strongly worded 'memorial' to the Council signed by a total of 78 students.

The Council, with a mild remonstrance, basically accepted the memorial, but the governesses were not re-instated. One consequence was that the Principal tendered his resignation and the Council requested him to continue in office; he resigned the following year when he was offered and accepted a living in the Forest of Dean.

We see, then, that from a disciplinary and organisational point of view the first seventeen years of the College's life were not altogether smooth. Undoubtedly, the restraints placed upon the lives of the adult Governesses and the almost adult students were often intolerable. In addition there seems to have been doubt in the minds of the Principal and the Matron concerning their objectives in this sphere.

It is easy to see that girls or governesses of independent mind or spirit would have fretted under the curbs of personal freedom, and one is reminded of the predicament of Sue Bridehead in Hardy's "Jude the Obscure". A significant number of Governesses at St. Matthias resigned rather than accept such terms, but presumably few of the students were in a position to follow their example. One wonders how many bore into the world the sense of grievance which is implied in their memorial to the Council over the dismissed Governesses.

Summary of Teaching Training in Bristol

In 1858 there was a strong recommendation from H.M.I.Bowstead for a Wesleyan and British College for teacher-trainees in the neighbourhood of Bristol to augment the paucity of places in the established Nonconformist Colleges[87]. This would have served the West of England and the growing district of South Wales. Unfortunately this was not established, and so there is no possibility for local comparison.

Independence of thought and feeling seem to have been curtailed by the philosophy, ethos and curriculum of the College. This may have been partly due to its Tractarian principles: ones which laid greater emphasis on unquestioning obedience and belief than most Protestant ethics. It may have been due to the realities of the work they were destined to do, which, especially after the introduction of the Revised Code in 1862, was the inculcation of the three essentials without much concern about the exploration of the physical or intellectual world outside the classroom.

It would be exciting to be able to report that Henry Moseley, as a member of the Council, recognised (as did successive Inspectors) the defects of the institution, in curricular and extra-curricular spheres, in organisation and discipline and above all, in the lack of cultural breadth. Unfortunately, though, although the Committee unanimously voted a warm memorial of thanks upon his death in 1872, recording that:

> "the advice of that good and judicious supporter was never sought in vain and in every case of importance, in the choice of Principals and Superintendents, and in matters generally affecting the well-being of the College he was ever found to take a lively and influential interest in the Council."

Nowhere in the minutes do we find that that able exponent of the work of Richard Dawes had sown any of the seeds of his philosophy at St. Matthias[88].

We have seen that the girls at the College were not altogether without spirit even though they lacked power, and arguably their training suited them best for a task which was to be fundamentally the organisation of routine and repetition. But perhaps that spirit, as in the case of Sue Bridehead, was to be translated into a sober attention to detail and duty, strengthened by a religion which, as Hardy implied, was more concerned with the letter than the spirit.

v. Religious Controversy and Popular and Clerical Attitudes towards Education

There is little evidence that at parental level there was much conflict regarding the provision of education. There is much evidence to suggest that the ordinary people sent their children to the best, or most convenient or cheapest, school, irrespective of its denomination provided that it was not Roman Catholic.

In one survey of the First Class of Barton National School 32% of the parents were Dissenters. We have seen how several children who left Clifton National School went to Dissenting schools, and St. Paul's National School which had a high reputation in what H.M.I.Cumin called a second class district had a high proportion of Dissenters among its parents[89]. The figures are:

Parents attending Church	65	33.3
" " Chapels	90	46.1
" " neither	40	20.5
Total	195	

Church or Chapel attendance at 79% seems rather high, but the figures probably represent a nominal allegiance. H.M.I.Cumin found that schoolmasters, clergymen, ministers and city missionaries were agreed that in selecting a school the poor looked for good standards of reading, writing and arithmetic[90].

The mass of the poor, he maintained, had no notion of the distinction apart from that between Protestants and Catholics, and that the religious difficulty, as such, did not exist. This despite the fact that the Catechism was taught to all pupils in Church schools with the exception of two which allowed children to be excused on a conscience clause, but this was rarely invoked. The children and their parents presumably did not concern themselves

with the doctrinal complexities of that particular document, and the violent objections which Baptist Ministers were to make over the possibility of having Baptismal Regeneration thrust down children's throats (in the event of a Church-dominated National System of Education) were not shared by ordinary people.

P.Cumin draws evidence from various members of the Anglican clergy to support his point, because one must not disguise the fact that he has a particular purpose in pursuing this doctrine other than disinterested enquiry. The report was part of the Newcastle Commission and was intended to be a precursor of that National Education which had been bedevilled by religious dissension throughout the century, particularly in 1839 and 1843.

Unfortunately, P.Cumin did not interview Dissenting Ministers or Managers of schools on this subject; or, if he did, he did not record their views.

Attitudes in Bristol towards Lord John Russell's proposed National Education Scheme 1839

The national conflict over the National Education Scheme put forward by Lord John Russell in 1839 is mirrored in Bristol, though there are indications that the Tory and Liberal press were rather more concerned with the issue than the rank and file. A Liberal Government had produced the scheme and opposition was almost entirely confined to the Churchmen (Tories for the most part), and the Wesleyan Methodists who tended, politically, to be right wing.

The feature of the proposed bill which called forth all the fury of the Tory press and the polemic of the clergy, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, was that the Roman Catholic version of the Scriptures should be recognised as of equal authority with the Anglican versions; or at least, that was the interpretation put upon the somewhat loosely drafted bill. Felix Farley's Journal called upon its readership to oppose the bill by signing petitions to prevent "the youth of the country from being drugged by such a heterogeneous admixture of truth and falsehood"[91]. It claimed

in a later edition that Bristol Radicals had canvassed signatures for petitions supporting the Government scheme by stationing booths in various public thoroughfares and placarding the walls with posters distorting the nature and intentions of the Bill. Without doubt the Tory Press and especially the Wesleyan Methodists in Bristol played upon the fears of Popery and the dangers of undermining the National Church.

The long letters signed by thirteen Wesleyan Methodist Ministers and another group of Wesleyans claimed that their objections lay in grounds of conscience and not as political partisans. They objected most strongly to the recognition for all the purposes of National Education in a Protestant country of the Popish version of the Scriptures[92].

Many letters in the Liberal Bristol Mercury signed variously: 'A Poor Methodist', 'Not a Methodist Preacher' and 'A Wesleyan' claimed that these views were not representative of the congregations; that Wesleyan preachers had used the pulpit for concerted attacks on the bill and had placed petitions at the entrances to their chapels and obtained signatures by working upon the fears of the timid. Some hinted that this was a conspiracy with the Church of England around which the Wesleyan Methodist moves "with as much faithfulness as the satellite of our system revolves round our planet"[93].

It is difficult to know what credence to give to these letters as evidence of rank and file views. As they are published in a rival newspaper it is conceivable that they are editorial comments masquerading as letters. What seems clear is that the needs of education were forgotten in the sectarian and political rivalry.

The member for Bristol, F.H.F.Berkeley, to whom the open letter signed by thirteen Wesleyan Ministers was addressed, was a Liberal and naturally supported the bill. His mildly and carefully worded reply was printed in Liberal and Tory Bristol papers alike, and he attempts to clarify the provisions of the Bill to allay fears of 'The Triumph of Rome'[94].

He points out that:

(1) periods would be set aside for peculiar doctrinal instruction.

(2) a Chaplain should be appointed for the special religious establishment.

(3) the number of children connected with any sect in the school warranting the appointment, a licensed minister of that sect should be also appointed for their special instruction.

(4) otherwise the parent or guardian of the child to be permitted to secure the attendance of such a licensed minister - the instruction to be given apart.

(5) Roman Catholics, if their parents or guardians require it, to be permitted to read their own versions of the Scriptures, or at the hours of special instruction.

(6) no certificate to be granted to a Candidate Teacher unless the authorised religious instructor attest his confidence in the character, religious knowledge and zeal of the candidate.

Clearly Berkeley's intention was to cool the argument and show how carefully sectarian integrity had been protected. Surprisingly perhaps, no sections of the press or its readership criticised these provisions on grounds of practicability: for, though they are admirable in theory, they seem to be idealistic and unworkable in practice. How many parents, for example, would have requested the 'attendance of a licensed minister' ? The net effect, if this Bill had passed, would probably have been to have strengthened the power of the Established Church over national education, rather than to have reduced it, and it is odd that this was not noticed at the time.

Perhaps a genuinely 'popular' view was expressed by the petition in support of the Bill agreed to by the Journeymen Brushmakers of the City, which points to the fact that the working classes are charged with ignorance, the source of all crime, for the want of education. They pray that the

honourable House will grant the sum solicited in order to establish a better system of education which would be "an imperishable pillar of strength to the throne, and promote the happiness of the people"[95].

As is well known, the reformed version of the Bill allowing grants totalling £30,000 per year to the National and British schools was the compromise which began, effectively, the system of inspection and governmental participation which developed throughout the century. The Bristol Tory press reacted violently to this, claiming that no self-respecting clergyman would subject his schools to the inspection of the Committee's Officer under the proviso that improvements suggested by the Commissioners should be forced upon them[96].

Superficially, it might appear that in the clash between Tory and Liberal, Churchmen and Nonconformists, the poor were the real sufferers. However, it is possible to argue that the conflict stimulated action rather than apathy, and that, in their anxiety not to be excelled, their programme of school building and educational development had a faster growth-rate than would have been the case without external threats. After all, the £30,000 which was the subject of contention was a tiny sum; C.B.Fripp calculated in 1841 that the sum expended annually under the voluntary system in Bristol alone was £36,000, and although these figures may be somewhat inflated, there is no doubt that the rivalry of the voluntary system produced beneficial as well as harmful effects.

Attitudes in Bristol towards the Educational Clauses in the Factories Act of 1843

The next educational crisis, which created even greater sectarian strife in Bristol, was the result of the educational clauses of the Factories Act of 1843. Considering the uproar of 1839 it is a little surprising that in drafting this Bill ministers were not more careful to avoid raising again the

spectre of domination by any one sect. Perhaps, understandably, they considered it as a small part of a Bill which affected a relatively small proportion of the children working in industry, namely the textile mills of the North. At this remove in time it would seem to many that this was a petty matter and a means of making party capital out of a potentially inflammatory issue.

This time it was a Tory Government which put forward the measures which were an attempt to regulate and civilise the conditions revealed by the Commission into the Employment of Children of 1842. The Nonconformists, who were joined in this battle by the Wesleyan Methodists, objected most strongly to that clause which provided that each school formed for the education of factory children should have a Committee of seven which should be chaired by the local clergyman. This carried with it the principle that the Scriptures and Catechism of the Established Church should be taught in such schools.

In Bristol the reaction was as violent as in many other parts of the country. As the Gazette remarked, no other proposed enactment in living memory had provoked such hostility among Christian Dissenters as this[97]. As a leader in the Gazette pointed out, although the framers of the Bill probably had no such intention, it was seen by many that this was an attempt to bring most schools under the domination of the Church, and consequently to give it control over the teaching of its doctrines and formularies.

There were numerous meetings held in Bristol by various Dissenting groups. Some of these were well-attended and vociferous, though not all of the speakers were very well informed on the subject of education.

However, it emerges from the newspapers' accounts that beneath the opposition lay genuine religious scruples. Richard Ash, a prominent Congregationalist who had contributed generously to school building in Bristol, objected to children being taught this "destructive dogma of baptismal regeneration" and the undermining of Dissenters' schools[98].

One petition which contained 6,456 signatures sums up the broad objections to the proposed act. It made clear that while the petitioners universally desired education they deprecated the evil and injustice of its being confined to the dominance of one particular sect. The measures, they felt, were calculated to destroy religious liberty and check the progress of information. At one meeting, which was fully reported in eight columns of the Bristol Mercury, Wesleyan, Baptist, Independent, Unitarian and other churches were represented, including some of the most active members of the Society of Friends. Mr. George Thomas asserted that should the Act become law the schools founded by Mr.H.O.Wills, who was on the platform, would have to be closed, although it is not altogether clear why this should have been so. Richard Ash, who chaired the meeting, considered that besides undermining the numerous well-conducted day schools it would also supersede the Sunday Schools and destroy the valuable work which had been done gratuitously; "a work which all the wisdom of the legislature would have been unable to bring about".

Despite the excitable tenor of some of the speeches, the impression emerges very strongly that Dissenters believed, rightly or wrongly, that this Bill, if passed, would undermine and finally destroy their contribution to the education of the country. But in making their protests they were aware of the educational needs which were still to be filled, as a letter to the editor of the Bristol Mercury pointed out[99]. The writer affirmed that Dissenters had always been the friends of education of the people and would be among the first to approve any scheme based upon the principles of religious freedom and equality, but he believed that this bill would not only trample upon civil and religious rights but would retard sound education.

The tone of the Bristol Tory press in the beginning of this controversy was often insolent and patronising: it is not difficult to infer that they believed that with a Government majority of 100 in the House of Commons and

300 in the House of Lords the outcome was clear[100]. Their change of position from 1839 when they had bitterly attacked the Educational Act on sectarian grounds was abrupt. Now they advocated laying aside sectarian differences and called upon Christians of every denomination to unite together to aid the Government to carry on this great and necessary work of national reformation[101]. One of their arguments was the numerical supremacy of the Established Church, which comprised, so an Editorial in Felix Farley's Journal claimed, 19 parts out of 20 of the whole population[102]. Allowing for the fact that no official religious census was made until 1851, this still represents a distortion of facts readily available to a newspaper. Figures published in 1841 showed that in Bristol active Nonconformists outnumbered Churchmen[103].

A Liberal paper quoted a particularly inflammatory article from a Tory newspaper which declared that any objections a Dissenter could have to this Bill could only be founded upon gross ignorance "as in truth the tenets of Dissenters generally are"[104]. As no source is given one must be wary of accepting this, but the same paper quoted remarks made by Dr. Bowring in a Tory newspaper to the effect that the Bill would "Church-of-Englandise" the country and if this objection were to be allowed to prevail the people would remain in everlasting ignorance. He claimed that the people wished to be "Church-of-Englandised" and educated, despite the objections of the sectarians.

The massive evidence, amounting to nearly 2,000,000 signatures throughout the country, told a different story, however, and although the Government of the day had a large majority unlike that of Lord John Russell in 1839, this clear indication of widespread opposition to an administratively minute detail had to be taken note of. The Bristol Tory Press closed the matter in editorial sorrow rather than anger. They regretted the venom which had been shown by the Nonconformists, and advocated, from henceforth, a plan of non-violent

non-co-operation[105]. The real losers, the editor claimed, would be the future generations of the poor, and it warned the Government from mistaking selfish clamour for the Voice of the People.

The provincial feeling on both matters had run high, at least as far as the middle and upper classes and their newspapers were concerned. There is little evidence, from Bristol, what working men thought. It is very likely that good, cheap education was in demand and in 1843 the provision of school places compared unfavourably with other towns of comparable size.

At a later stage we shall see that of those who might have been attending school at this time in the educationally under-provided large parish of SS. Philip and Jacob some 30.3% of males and 39.2% of females were unable to sign their names, a fairly clear indication that, for all their endeavour, the Established and Nonconformist Churches had much still to do in Bristol. Additionally, the provision of education did not mean that its advantages would or could be made use of.

The controversies of 1839 and 1843 seemed to be confined to the ecclesiastical and managerial levels, and may have done something to spur the building activities of the next few years; both sides, having established their independence, were morally obliged to prove its necessity in forwarding educational works.

Attitudes of the Churches to each other, and attitudes of prominent laymen to the provision of education

Apart from the conflict engendered by national issues, there seems to have been little real acrimony between the Church and Nonconformity (except towards the Roman Catholic Church). There was a tendency for Churches to ignore each other's educational activity; for example in 1843, when an Anglican school was built in Lawford's Gate, St. Philip's, and named after Hannah More, a speaker deplored the absence of a school in such a large

parish. In fact the British School in Redcross Street, one street away, had been flourishing since 1808, and another school, Dings British School, opened the year before[106]. In St. Philip's there was ample scope for school building, so such duplication was not harmful. In some areas, though, the two societies often opened schools at similar dates and in similar places, which usually affected the British Schools adversely, as they needed to charge higher fees than the National Schools.

Some laymen believed fervently that education should not only remain independent of the State but should be self-supporting. Mr. Handel Cossham, owner of a coal-mine at Kingswood, has left two major statements concerning education which he made in July and November of 1861. Although he believed that the state of elementary education was satisfactory, he considered its cost, at nearly 20s.0d. per annum per head, too great. Additionally he felt that the payment out of public funds for teaching every class of religious opinion was a "monstrous inconsistency". Such encouragement of "Unitarianism, Trinitarianism, Methodism and no-ism" could only lead to a weakening of religious feeling by convincing the people that there was no difference between right and wrong. He disagreed most strongly with Mr. Cumin's statement that colliers were in favour of compulsory education; in fact the case was quite the opposite and they believed that it would retard the progress of education. Mr. Cossham did not explain how this could be so[107].

In another speech in November of the same year he took up the assertion of the Edinburgh Review of July 1861 and The Times of September 28th 1861 which supported his contention that the nation did not get value for its money. Although he felt that the Revised Code would be likely to improve the quality of the work done, the only sound and just principle was that the people should educate themselves. He then gives a carefully worked scheme to show how a school of 70 children charging 2d. a week could be made self-sufficient, allowing for a small contribution of voluntary aid.

The scheme depends on the fact that the teacher is paid £35 per year.

He asserts that parents wish to see that their children are educated, and that the transfer to the State of this duty would be "one of the most terrible calamities that could afflict society and curse the world".

One might think that Cossham's views were dictated by self-interest, but at another point he suggests that one of the most powerful incentives for education would be a prohibition on the employment of children under 15 unless they had attained a certain standard of education, which he details. As he says, the attraction of the child's wages at present militates against their education.

As we have seen, there was a strong wage incentive to take children down the mine at an early age to swell the family income, and Handel Cossham realised that if compulsion were to be avoided some legislation would be necessary to achieve minimal standards of education. However, as miners tended to follow their fathers, few of their children received much education until compulsory attendance was instituted. More extensive figures for Gloucestershire corroborate this general finding.

Cossham was regarded as one of the more enlightened proprietors; on the outskirts of Bristol in the rural parts of Bedminster the farming interest, particularly the smaller farmers who could not afford machinery, gave unequivocal evidence to P.Cumin. The teaching of reading was desirable so that labourers could read their Bibles and be deterred from going to the beer-house. They might be taught to write a little, but cyphering was no use to them. They were opposed to any more advanced education because it would put an end to labouring people who would instead become schoolmasters, etc. The consequence would be that the farmers would have to do the work themselves or hire labourers at double wages. The spread of education had

also led to a decline in the availability of juveniles, whose mothers preferred to keep them at school rather than accept board and lodging and 1s.0d. to 2s.0d. a week as agricultural servants. The more intelligent farmers, however, who foresaw the increasing role of agricultural mechanisation, thought that as larger farms were introduced, skilled farm-labourers would be necessary[108].

Only one employer was noted as running a school for the benefit of his juvenile employees, and as it was equipped with spacious accommodation for master and mistress and manifested "a generous benevolence in the whole arrangements" it is clear that he thought education of value, but whether for humanitarian reasons or to improve social control or profitability is not clear[109]. Others approved of or in some cases made attendance at Sunday Schools obligatory, but, presumably, in industries which depended on cheap, dexterous but basically unskilled labour, it was not in the interests of manufacturers to insist very strongly on the education of the young. Certainly there seems to be a unanimity of opinion expressed in evidence to P.Cumin that compulsory education would not be acceptable in the country[110].

One of the indices of public opinion, and especially the opinion of the clergy, is their attitude towards the teaching profession. A considerable note of disapproval is sounded by some of Cumin's witnesses. E.P.Vaughan, rector of Wraxall, Bedminster, and Diocesan Inspector for Bath and Wells, testified that masters and mistresses trained at normal schools were, as a body dissatisfied and lived beyond their income. The mistresses tended to lead their pupils to look with contempt on domestic service, and despised chores like scrubbing floors or cleaning grates. The masters often looked for higher salaries than the clergy themselves, and the better educated ones disliked teaching small children to read and write[111].

There is some indication of the attitudes of the working classes towards education in the evidence given to P.Cumin, particularly by schoolmasters.

Benjamin Wilson, schoolmaster of St. Michael's School, indicated that some parents sent their children to school after finding that education was necessary to procure a situation. In his district the children of"low Irish and dissipated people" were the only class who did not attend school. His testimony seems to be corroborated by a relatively high literacy rate for this parish of 84.62% for 1850[112]. Nevertheless, he only gave three years as the average length of total attendance[113].

Mr. Turner of the British Redcross School gave evidence that attendance had steadily increased though the fees had increased three times. He recognised that in some cases parents could not send their children because of poverty or lack of proper clothes. There were also a class of parents who were indifferent to the education of their children. Redcross Street School was in St. Philip's parish and in 1859 at the time of this statement the literacy figure was 69.7% for men, 60.8% for women. By 1870 the overall figure had improved to 70%: that is, 74.9% for men, 65.1% for women[114]. Turner's evidence is valuable because, unlike some of the clergy, he distinguishes between those who are unable to educate their children and those who are unwilling. The low literacy figures of this parish are affected considerably by the ranks of labourers, a very high percentage of whom followed their fathers in this work.

Again, there is a strong indication that education could only reach this section of the community as a result of compulsion, though it is true that the largest increase in literacy came in the decade before schooling was made compulsory, so the impact of the work of the Bristol School Board in this educationally underprivileged area must also be acknowledged.

The representatives of the Established Church were firm in their belief that the labouring classes should contribute to the cost of educating their children[115]. It was generally agreed that parents would not value free education. There are variations in clerical opinion as to the reasons for

parents not sending their children to school. These depended largely on the economic conditions and pressures of the parish; in Bedminster the Reverend E.P.Vaughan claimed that they were not prevented by poverty, but because they could not forgo the wages which mothers could obtain in field-work while girls looked after the younger children. The Vicar of St. James' maintained on the one hand that some parents undervalued education through "badness of disposition, vicious indulgence or downright stupidity", but gave examples of extreme poverty as well. The superintendent of the Hannah More schools in St. Philip's claimed that very few sober parents were unable to educate their children, and the incumbent of Trinity, St. Philip's, pointed out that destitution would bring them to rags and their children to a ragged school[116].

There is a certain tone of complacency which emerges from the pages of this report and of others produced by the Established Church in Bristol. Partly, one suspects, this was the result of ignorance of the true state of affairs. In opening a new school in Temple New School, in March 1843, for example, the Reverend R.L.Cogan reminded his hearers of the painful details recently given by Mr. Ashley of the state of vice and ignorance in which such large masses of the people were still bound. Yet, in 1841, C.B.Fripp's survey had revealed just such appalling ignorance and vice in that very parish and area[117].

Without actually saying so, there is a tacit assumption that poverty is the fault of the individual and the misfortune of his child. The tone of most Nonconformist documents is subtly different; there is less concern about the faults of the case and more concentration on concern for the child. This is particularly true of the reformatory schools which had been founded by Nonconformists.

As has been described, the Church tended to ignore the existence of Dissenting schools and the latter only acknowledged their presence when an

exodus of pupils took place. At no time during the period 1800-1870 does there appear to have been an attempt at a combination to produce a comprehensive system, as in Liverpool, with the exception of the first few years of the work of the Committee of the Royal Bristol Lancastrian School.

It would be interesting to see what the outcome of such a system would have been: probably in rationalising school building there would have been a reduction of choice in the more favoured areas. On the other hand, rationalisation would have meant that there would have been no shortfall in school places which was evident in some areas in the School Board Census of 1871.

The competition between the two bodies, for it was evidently seen as such by the Established Church, probably had the effect of achieving a higher growth rate in Bristol than areas where the number of Dissenters was not so high. But all the evidence points to the fact that the ordinary people were unmoved by the rivalry; those who could afford to do so and were concerned to have their children educated to minimal standards did so, and those who were too poor or feckless did not.

Chapter 2

Summary

It appears that schools of Anglican and Nonconformist origin exhibited, at least to their subscribers, strong concern about the institutions as agents of social control, though the emphasis in Nonconformist documents suggests that their aim was not totally opposed to upward mobility. From the limited records available, mainly from 1862 or later, it would seem that Nonconformist schools in Bristol had slightly wider and more diverse curricula than Anglican schools, though there is no evidence that they fared better at the hands of the Inspectors.

Analysis of various school registers and the evidence given to H.M. Inspectors suggest that the average length of stay in elementary schools was approximately two years, and it is probable that many children had completed their formal education by the age of 10. However, children's schooling was frequently sporadic and it was not uncommon for children to return to school after some time in employment as errand boys.

Teachers, financially, were at a disadvantage and the methods dictated by some school managers of operating schools put a considerable strain upon them. A notable feature which emerges from the examination of school logs, Inspectors' reports and details of the early history of the training college is the poor health of many teachers, pupil teachers and teachers in training.

Analysis of early admission records of St. Matthias shows that the majority of girls had parents engaged in commerce or service or who could be designated by the general term 'artisan': only three from the original fifty-eight girls had fathers described as 'labourer'. It is interesting, then, to consider the reports of the early inspectors of the College, who considered the students' reading weak, and the testimony of the Principal, who claimed that many students, on admission, knew little of reading or even of common words in use. In the main era of voluntary activity it would appear that neither conditions of service nor those of recruitment and training encouraged the emergence of teachers who were

cultivated and imbued with intellectual independence as local and national figures such as C.B.Fripp and Matthew Arnold had hoped.

However, this was not true of the educational activities of Sunday Schools in Bristol, for though they may well have cloaked educational deficiencies, they provided an opportunity for cultivated men and women to come into contact with the poor and ignorant. Opportunities which, if one may generalise from some Nonconformist exemplars, were seriously and conscientiously pursued.

We have seen that Sunday Schools were agencies for social control in addition to their function of teaching and evangelisation; a role which some employers of children evidently found useful, even, in some cases, insisting that their juvenile employees should attend Sunday Schools as a condition of employment.

We have seen that denominational rivalry flourished more vehemently in the columns of Bristol's newspapers than in the thoughts and attitudes of individual parents, who had benefited from the earlier rivalry which had produced enough school places by 1871 in all but two of the parishes of Bristol to accommodate all children of elementary school age.

Contemporary accounts, many of them recorded by H.M.I.s, and other contributions by proprietors and the clergy would suggest that by 1860 in Bristol a majority of children, at least from parents who were artisans or their affiliants, were attending school for a time: exceptions were children of miners, many labourers and the extremely poor. Much of their evidence was inevitably based on unsubstantiated testimony, although in comparing the maritime districts of Bristol and Plymouth H.M.I the Reverend P. Cumin did use some signature data drawn from marriage records. However, it is now possible to look in greater detail at the material and test the hypothesis that different occupational groups, for one reason or another, made greater use than others of the educational opportunities which existed under the voluntary system. In the next chapters we shall attempt to do this.

CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3: (i) Literacy in Bristol. Evidence of Parish Records

In introducing objective evidence of educational attainment in Bristol, I am not intending to imply that there is a direct causal relationship between the percentages of literates and the provision of elementary education.

As can be seen from the table below the majority of parishes in Bristol show percentages of literacy above the national average, in some cases substantially so.

The figures in the table and the summary in the graph are not fully comprehensive, mainly owing to incomplete Church Registers or Bishop's Transcripts, but they show some indication of the trends of literacy and possibly of educational provision in various parishes. Some, like All Saints', City, with a small population mainly of commercial groups, achieve a high degree of literacy early in the century. The majority show an upward trend from 1840 onwards, to a certain extent perhaps reflecting the school-building activities of the late 1820's and early 1830's.

Combined percentages of brides and bridegrooms signing the marriage register

Parish	1800	1810	1820	1830	1840	1850	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900
SS. Philip & Jacob	53.5	50.5	52.8	52.35	52.7	61.2	65.25	70.0	80.3	88.1	96.9
Christchurch			78.9	68.75	82.5	85.63		86.3		97.23	
All Saints', City			(77.1)		(98.2)				(97.4)		
Holy Trinity					50.0		70.96	85.89			
St. Nicholas	48.38	46	60.01	78.08	81.3	80.3	75.4	87.18		97	
St. Thomas		51.64	67.05	73.53	67.02	84.13		83.4	83.34		
Temple			57.5	68.12	60.81	75.28					
St. James			51.07	57.75	64.63	69.31					
St. Michael's			67.7	77.54	76.42	84.62	85.94				
Redcliffe					65.45	80.08		87.91	93.75	96.53	
St. John	59.3		61	66.4		72.86	83.93				
St. Paul			63.66	67.75	68.42	80.08					
National Average					67.3 (1841)	69.3	75.4	80.6	86.5	93.6	97.2

(1)

The fullest and perhaps the most interesting figures are those for SS. Philip and Jacob, which until 1840 are constant at about 50+% (though in 1814 they dropped to below 40%). In view of the paucity of school places in this area until 1808 (and a deficiency as late as 1871) it is perhaps surprising that they are as high as this. However, we see that there is a rapid improvement in basic literacy of the general population from 1840 onwards as Anglican and Nonconformist groups recognised the needs of this deprived area. The decades 1870-1900 show an approximate growth rate of 10% per decade, the final impetus being given by the formation of the Bristol School Board in 1870, which set about augmenting the deficiency of school places in St. Philip's, and the Act of 1880 making elementary schooling compulsory. The last two might be construed by some, and have been by at least one[2] as unnecessary in view of the success of Bristol's voluntary system. However, an analysis of literacy by trade or occupation points to a different conclusion.

The Registrar General's figures for Bristol for 1846 and 1864 quoted by R.L.Sargant[3] are 68% and 76% respectively for men and women (combined), indicating a net improvement of 8% in that period. Separately this represents 4% improvement for men and 12% improvement for women. As can be seen from the table, taking the years 1850 and 1870 in some parishes there is scarcely any change; a plateau of a kind having already been reached. The most substantial change is in SS. Philip and Jacob with an overall improvement of nearly 10%, We shall look at this in greater detail in section ii of this chapter.

Chapter 3: (ii)

Bristol: Prison Statistics

In 1838 the Chaplain in Bristol City Gaol compiled some statistics of educational attainments of prisoners and also which denomination of schools, if any, they had attended. Out of 516 prisoners who stated their source of education from 1833 to 1838 it appeared that there had been instructed in:

Church of England Schools	284
Dissenting Schools	187
Roman Catholic Schools	24
Adult Schools	11
Total	516

Syllabus of the Degree of Education of Male Prisoners during several years

Years	Read and Write	%	Read Well Not Write	%	Spell	No Education	Total
1833	66	38.8	26	15.2	37	41	170
1834	66	45.5	37	25.5	35	7	145
1835	69	45.1	35	22.7	24	26	154
1836	104	46.2	42	18.6	36	43	225
1837	93	52.5	33	18.6	34	17	177
	398	45.6	173	19.8	166	134	871

(4)

We see that the average of those who could read and write improves steadily, giving a figure of 52.5 in 1837. One must remember that the majority of the prisoners were men, by a proportion of greater than 4:1.

This report is interesting in that it gives details of schools attended and one can see a certain pattern to the educational attainments. Unfortunately, we have no details of the tests which the Chaplain used.

A Statement of the Schools at which the Prisoners were educated during several years

Years	No Schools	Day Schools	Sunday Schools	Pay Schools	Not Known	Total
1833	41	41	18	33	36	169
1834	48	45	21	25	8	147
1835	16	66	30	14	29	155
1836	26	77	43	36	41	223
1837	18	63	62	17	17	177
Total	149	292	174	125	131	871

It is noticeable that there is a high correlation between those who attended schools (591) and those who could read (571). Similarly a fairly high correlation between those who attended Day Schools (417), as opposed to Sunday Schools, and those who could write as well as read (398). However, we do not have the data to determine whether they were the same people.

One argument against accepting gaol statistics as indices of literacy is that they are of a different composition from the populace and one would agree that they do not reflect the whole of society. However, their educational backgrounds could scarcely have been worse than those described by Fripp in his report on the Bristol Poor, and our study of the Gloucestershire prison evidence shows that, treated with caution, these statistics are helpful rather than misleading.

From these raw figures we have no means of telling the geographical derivation of these prisoners and similarly no way of determining their age.

An advantage of the fuller Gloucestershire records to be considered later is that both of these determinants are available.

Chapter 3: (iii)

Statistical Surveys BRISTOL

The Bristol Statistical Society, founded in 1836, closely followed London and Manchester in its organisation and early interest in the condition of the poor. A pilot study was published in 1837 and the main study in 1838.

Results of the literacy tests carried out in two surveys by the Bristol Statistical Society

	1837			1838		
	Sample	No.	%	Sample	No.	%
Heads of families who can read and write, more or less	473	234	49.8	9861	5122	51.9
Only read		99	20.9		2523	25.6
Total who can read		333	70.40		7645	77.5
Unable to read or write		137	28.96		2216	22.5
Not ascertained		3	0.6			

The enumerators concentrated on the poorest housing areas in Bristol, located in the parishes of Temple and the adjacent SS. Philip and Jacob. The full questionnaire follows closely the lay-out adopted by the London and Manchester Societies. It was an ambitious survey and encompassed over 20,000 persons. C.Bowles Fripp of the Bristol Statistical Society and his agent made it clear in the preface to their report that questions concerning literacy were not accompanied by a test: they relied on the testimony of the interviewees. However, they appear to have met with a co-operative spirit and one supposes that the subjects had nothing to gain or lose by telling the truth. Fripp writes:

> "No test could be generally applied by the agent to ascertain the ability of the parents or children to read or write, and the fact therefore has been taken on their testimony only. There can be no doubt that the degree in which these elements of instruction are possessed is far inferior from the mere numbers stated in this return."

He evidently felt that in many cases the claim to be able to read or write would be the minimum: i.e. ability to inscribe a signature would, for many, be the extent of their accomplishment.

We know that his pilot survey published in 1837 was concentrated in the poorer parts of Temple Parish, and by abstracting the designated streets from the Parish Registers of Temple between 1837 and 1840 we get the following results of those able to sign the register.

Year	Sample	Males	%	Females	%	Combined %
1837	10	5	50	2	20	35
1838	17	12	70.5	10	58.8	64.71
1839	52	36	69.2	21	40.3	54.75
1840	86	61	70.9	47	54.6	62.77
	165	114	69.0	80	48.5	58.75

(5)

Unfortunately, unlike some parishes, it is not possible to get figures for earlier years, therefore this sample only represents those who, on average, were marrying at the age of 25 in these respective years. However, the figure is close to those obtained by Fripp and it is reasonable to suppose that extrapolated backwards, and taking account of distribution of age groups it would reduce and come closer to his figure of 50%.

Fripp's main study, for which that described above was a limited field trial, was conducted on a considerably larger scale. In the Temple study the Society gave exact details of the streets (and number of men and women interviewed in those streets); as published, the main survey does not,

unfortunately, give similarly detailed data. However, Fripp indicates that the survey was carried out in a large parish close to the Temple which was densely populated and showed a high degree of deprivation. There is little doubt that this parish was SS. Philip and Jacob.

Questions relating to literacy and education were a small part of the questionnaire, which ranged in the most minute detail over the household management and living conditions of these people.

The figures which Fripp gives for literacy have often been quoted, sometimes as an indication that even in a deprived area literacy was above 50%; sometimes as an example of the enormous educational gap to be filled; sometimes as corroboration of that 3:2 reading:writing ratio which students of literacy from Webb onwards have noted. But these figures, based on testimony rather than test, as Fripp freely stated, are subject to all the doubts and suspicions which surround this kind of empirical method. However, it is possible to compare these figures with those obtainable from marriage records and, after the limited success of comparing Fripp's results with the relevant parochial records, it was thought to be a justifiable task to compare his figures with those extracted from the records of SS. Philip and Jacob. As we have no indication of ages or sex of the adults it was necessary to calculate their proportions and the proportions of those in various age groups by calculating these from the 1841 census, using the figures given for Bristol, and using the sample number given by Fripp, which was 9861.

In the following table certain abbreviations have been used and these are as follows:

M = Male proportion of Sample
Y = Male Literacy as judged by ability to sign marriage register
F = Female Proportion of Sample
Z = Female Literacy as judged by ability to sign marriage register

Year	Ages	M	Y	F	Z
1838	20-25	18.1	60.7	19.6	41.3
1835	25-30	16.1	62.35	16.0	42.6
1830	30-35	14.9	59.6	14.0	45.1
1825	35-40	10.5	61.2	9.6	41.8
1820	40-45	10.8	62.9	10.6	42.7
1815	45-50	7.1	49.62	6.7	32.84
1810	50-55	7.3	54.7	6.9	45.4
1805 and before	55 and above	15.2	62	16.8	43.3

Multiplying M by Y and dividing by the total proportion of the sample gives $\frac{275275.7}{4583}$ = 60.1 for males.

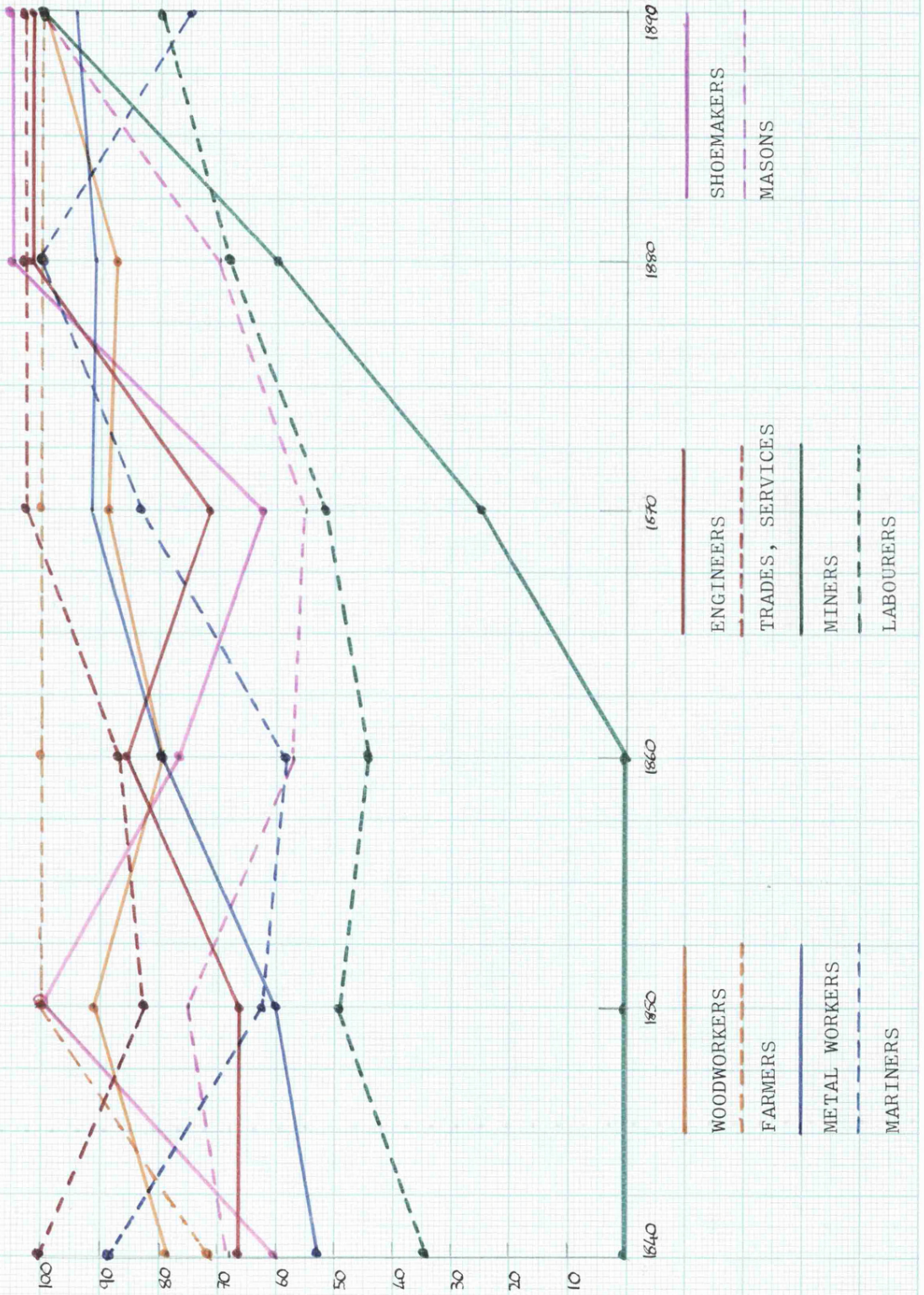
Multiplying $\frac{F \times Z}{\text{proportion of sample}}$ = $\frac{223622.7}{5278}$ = 42.4

So the combined figure is a 50.6% ability to sign their names of a cross-section of a poor area of Bristol. Clearly, no one can falsify the ability to sign a name so the registers can only under-estimate rather than over-estimate. As far as Fripp's figure of 51.9% is concerned we have already suggested that they are likely to be overestimates rather than under-estimates; the resulting difference of 1.3% indicates a significant correlation and suggests that both the testimony of the Marriage Register and Fripp's survey may be relied upon with some degree of confidence.

As far as we know this is one of very few comparisons attempted between statistical material and marriage signature evidence, and its success suggests that this could be a fruitful area in local studies where the data are known to apply to a discrete region.

Other interesting data given by this survey which can be compared with marriage signature evidence are the number of children over 7 described by their parents as being unable to read or write. Of a total of 3044 over 7, 1309 or 43% were described as such. These children who married would normally have done so within the next 10-20 years. In a controlled situation, which clearly does not apply here, one would expect the number of adults making marks in 1850-1860 to be somewhere in the region of 43%; in fact the figures for 1850 and 1860 are 38.8% and 34.7% respectively[6]. Immigration and other variables would lead one to expect no clear comparison between these figures, so it is interesting to see that they are not too discrepant. They suggest, as our main comparison has done, that the interviewees did not exaggerate either their own or their children's educational achievements. It could also suggest that, by one means or another, substantial numbers may have attained basic literacy at a later age than childhood.

GRAPH 1 121a Literacy of occupational groups SS. Philip and Jacob 1840-1890



Chapter 3

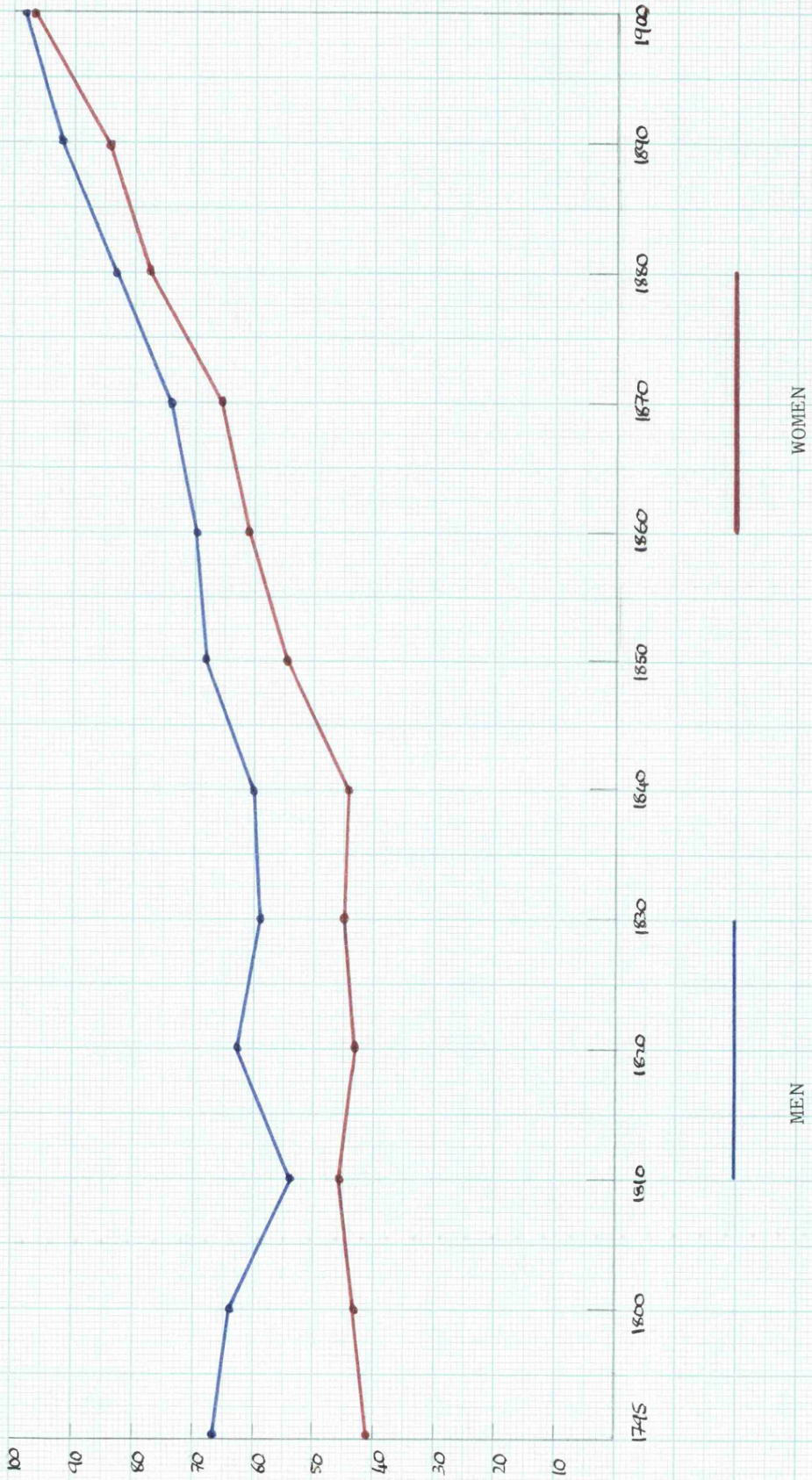
(iv) SS. Philip and Jacob

This extensive parish repays further study as a paradigm of an urban community which, judging from the list of occupations cited in Fripp's report, while in no way self-supporting, had a spectrum of trades which would have given it a certain homogeneity.

In the occupational chart opposite we can see that most occupations begin the period with a literacy rate of above 40% and some who needed communication skills, farmers, tradesmen, suppliers of services, maintain a high degree of literacy throughout and reach total literacy comparatively early. (Professions for which literacy is a sine qua non have not been included and the parish registers for this period show no anomalies such as illiterate accountants, surgeons or schoolmasters.)

It is interesting to trace the development of occupations whose need for literacy would have been personal satisfaction or development rather than essential to their working life. Two examples are labourers and miners. The first, a large sample (and in Fripp's catalogue of occupations named by his interviewees, labourers accounted for 1453 or 25.6% of the total) shows the considerable increase of 36% between 1850 and 1860 and this probably shows us something of the social forces operating at this point, as much as educational provision. However the steep rise from 1870 to 1890 may be credited to the wide provision made by the Bristol School Board and, later, the introduction of compulsory education. The same may be said of miners, for, though this is a small sample, it is probably representative and is corroborated by more extensive figures from the South Gloucestershire and Forest of Dean coalfields. In St. Philip's until 1860 the figures suggest total illiteracy; it is only after this that they rise steeply, demonstrating the value of State-aided education and compulsion in bringing education to this group.

GRAPH 2 122A Comparative literacy of men and women in the parish of SS. Philip and Jacob 1795-1900



An interesting inference which can be made from this evidence is that those who for reasons of principle or financial vision saw education as a 'good' for which they were prepared to pay were able, either by means of the voluntary provision, informal networks or Private Adventure schools to secure this, even in a parish which was short of school places.

Others, in non-literate trades, saw educational 'goods' as inferior to others: possibly through fecklessness as some contemporary observers maintained, or possibly because they believed that amelioration of their family's circumstances was a greater 'good'. It was the children of these that universal educational provision, compulsory education and abolition of fees rescued from educational oblivion. There is no indication from a study of the Bristol evidence that even had there been sufficient school places in all parishes, all children, and especially girls, would have been educated to these minimum standards.

Male and female literacy differences

In most of the parishes of Bristol the gap between male and female literacy was approximately 10% until compulsory education reduced it to approximately 1%. This is a characteristic of most urban societies in the 19th century, in contrast with rural areas which often show a superiority of females over males, at least after 1850. In the graph for male and female variations in literacy from 1795-1900 we see that although there are fluctuations in the relative rates, after 1840 the difference is steadily reduced.

There is no indication in Bristol that educational provision for girls was any worse than that for boys, but it seems that the principle, somewhat dogmatically stated by R.L. Sargant, that

> "throughout the world education is of more value to the male sex, as a means of advancement; and girls are kept from school, to help their mothers."

seemed to have some allegiance in the minds of Bristol citizens throughout the 19th century.

Social mobility

The following mobility table which has been calculated from SS. Philip and Jacob marriage registers shows the social mobility of males of all occupations in terms of literacy, compared with the occupations of their fathers. Columns A-B and E-F are self-explanatory, but in columns C-D we have a horizontal sub-division by which those whose occupations are unchanged (e.g. a cabinet-maker follows his father in the same trade) are in the upper sections; those who follow a similar occupation (e.g. a smith whose father is a ship-smith) are in the lower sections.

These categories are rather more objective than categories A-B and E-F, where inevitably some subjective judgement is involved in many assessments: although for many one can be fairly confident that justice is done (e.g. labourer-father → carpenter-son).

SOCIAL MOBILITY : ST PHILIP AND ST JACOB

A	B	C	D	E	F
Less Literate Occupations		Occupations Unchanged		More Literate Occupations	
Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate
1840					
5.3	8.2	18.9	23	5.9	10.6
		8.2	19.5		
		Similar Occupations			
1850					
5.8	8.3	16.7	28.4	2.9	15.5
		7.5	14.6		
1860					
1.76	10.6	20.7	24.3	2.2	11.5
		4.8	23.8		
1870					
3	10.5	13	22	2	14
		7	28.5		
1880					
1.97	7.89	9.2	26.9	0	13.15
		10.5	30.2		
1890					
0.64	17.4	2,5	31.6	1.29	10.96
		0.64	35.4		

As can be seen from this chart one of the striking features is the considerable proportions whether literate or not who remain in the same or similar occupations as their fathers. This remains a fairly consistent figure throughout the period as the following aggregates show:

1840	69.6
1850	72.6
1860	73.6
1870	70.5
1880	76.8
1890	70.1

Those who move into less literate occupations remain fairly constant combined percentages until 1890, by which time male illiteracy has declined steeply and a larger number of literates are seen to be entering occupations in which their literacy is unlikely to be required. (In both columns B and E we are considering activities which might be supposed to require less or greater literacy rather than occupations where literacy was essential.)

Upward mobility for literates is greatest in 1850 and 1870; thereafter there is a slight decline.

One expected result of the changing pattern of literacy is that upward mobility becomes increasingly rare for illiterates. However, towards the end of the century as we approach 90% literacy for males, downward mobility for literates increases. A conjectural explanation for this is that basic literacy as represented by the ability to sign a name no longer has much significance beyond that fact.

Although it is interesting to reflect that several thousand literate men were doing the same work in this parish in 1860 as their illiterate fathers before them, we do not know to what extent changing patterns of commerce, communication and transaction made their greater literacy a real advantage in their economic survival.

Detailed examination of occupational-specific literacy could be used as one means of checking Fripp's statistical survey, for he gives an entire list

of occupations (including brothel-keepers) and the numbers within each who answered his agent's questions.

By finding averages for different occupational groups from marriage records it is possible to make a reasonable hypothesis for the average percentage literacy of each group in 1840 and then test this against Fripp's overall figures. Representatives of some groups are too few for this to be viable and other occupational groups which appear in Fripp's catalogue do not appear in the marriage registers. However, though this is an exercise full of approximations it produces some interesting results. In the following table column A shows the number of the occupational group as it appears in Fripp's appendix; column B the percentage of illiterates in that occupational group calculated from marriage records of SS. Philip and Jacob for 1837-41; column C the number of illiterates which would be produced by an application of those percentages to the figures in column A. Many categories cannot be calculated for reasons already stated, but the overall percentage of illiteracy at 43.2% compares closely with Fripp's overall percentage of 39.9% illiteracy for males. Most importantly, it shows clearly the way in which in a survey of this kind the overall literacy figures are depressed by the substantial numbers of labourers.

	A No.	B % of illiterates	C Numbers	D Notes
Labourers	1453	70.5	1024	
Shoemakers etc.	520	40	208	
Woodworkers	277	22	61	
Charwomen	(272)			
Paupers	(233)			
Tailors	161	0	0	
Painters, Glaziers, Tilers etc.	157	25	39	
Masons & stone-cutters	135	39.4	53	
Hawkers	(128)			only 1
Sempstresses & dressmakers	(125)			
Smiths & farriers	115	44	51	
Laundresses	(104)			
Mariners & bargemen	99	30	30	
Butchers	78	17.6	14	
Shopkeepers	60	14	8	
Braziers, Brass-founders, & brightsmiths	55	0	0	
Pipe-makers	(55)			
Glass-blowers & cutters	53	50	27	
Bakers	52	16.7	9	
Hostlers, grooms & horse-keepers	51	25	13	
Curriers	(48)			only 1
Brush, clog & patten-makers	47			
Engineers	44	30.8	14	
Coopers	(38)			only 1
Servants out of place	35	12.5	4	
Hawkers of fruit	(34)			
Comb-makers	32	66.7	21	
Maltsters & brewers	32	20	6	
Brothel-keepers & prostitutes	(32)			
Basket-makers	30	66.6	20	
Hatters	30	11.1	3	
Travellers	30	0	0	

	A No.	B % of illiterates	C Numbers	D Notes
Weavers	29	33.3	10	
Gardeners	28	25	7	
Schoolmasters	28	0	0	
Spinners of flax & twine	(27)			
Provision-sellers	(26)			
Plumbers & block-makers	25	0	0	
Rope & sacking makers	25	50	13	
Wheel and millwrights	25	0	0	
Basket-women	(24)			
Milkmen	(23)			
Police	23	0	0	
Chairmakers	(22)			
Dealers in coal	(22)			
Ironfounders & ironmongers	22	66.6	15	
Coachmakers	21	0	0	
Pensioners	(21)			
Toy-makers & turners	(20)			only 1
Brick & tile-makers	(19)			only 1
Greengrocers	(18)			
Soap boilers	(17)			only 1
Pig & cattle drivers	(16)			
Cab-drivers	(15)			only 1
Confectioners	15	0	0	
Lodging house keepers	(15)			
Midwives & nurses	(15)			
Trunk & box-makers	(14)			
Hairdressers	(13)			
Clock-makers	(12)			only 1
Match-makers	(12)			
Mechanics	(12)			
Shipwrights & carpenters	11	12.5	1	
Tobacconists	(11)			
Harness and saddle-makers	10	0	0	
Tin-plate workers	10	0	0	

	A No.	B % of illiterates	C Numbers	D Notes
Other occupations giving employment to less than 10 persons each	(207)			
No calling, incapable of work	(176)			
	5681			
	3818		1651	

= 43.2 illiteracy

56.8 literacy

Conclusion

In an inspector's report for 1868 the Revd. J. Rice Byrne drew attention to the fact that of the 36 or so parishes of Bristol and Clifton, with a population estimated at about 170,000, there were only 24 Church of England schools under duly qualified teachers, receiving grants annually from the Government. If, as he assumed, the annual grant schools in connection with other religious bodies, and with the Poor Law Board, together with those that came under the Inspector of Reformatories, were in Bristol in the same proportion as elsewhere connected with the Church of England, it was his conclusion that a large residue of children were either imperfectly educated or not educated at all, and that the residue was annually increasing. Although there were no accurate statistics showing the number of children receiving scanty instruction or none at all, he felt that his findings should be cited in support of those who insisted that much remained to be done, especially in large towns.

As we have seen, the extensive survey carried out by the newly-formed School Board three years later showed that only two areas, Bedminster and St. Philip's, were deficient in school places; but that did not mean that attendance at schools in the other parishes was regular or universally successful. On the other hand it may be argued that the Voluntary System had achieved its (what to us may seem limited) aims in educating a substantial majority of the populace in the skills of reading and writing, and in exercising social control.

However, as the graphs in this chapter show, it was not until the Education Act of 1870 and implementation of compulsory education in 1880 that the most dramatic rises in literacy take place in certain occupational groups, especially labourers and miners, and also that the disparity between attainment of literacy skills between male and female rapidly narrows. Indubitably, the two main organisations, the National Society and the British Society, laid the

foundations for a system of elementary education and introduced capital and annual expenditure on a scale which no nineteenth century government could have contemplated.

Another finding of this chapter seems important, namely the strong correlation between the statistical survey carried out in 1838 and the evidence to be drawn from marriage records. There is an implicit suggestion here that this would be a fruitful source for further research in other regions where statistical surveys were carried out in precisely defined areas. A further implication, which we present tentatively, which has been deduced from the data concerning the educational state of children compared with an examination of marriage records at relevant later stages, is that substantial numbers of children may have learnt skills of literacy subsequent to their childhood.

CHAPTER 4 (i)

Introduction

Chapter 4

i. Introduction

In considering Education and Literacy in Gloucestershire we shall be concentrating on literacy as measured by evidence from marriage records and other sources, rather than a detailed consideration of educational provision, though examination of various aspects of this will be included in section vii. G.H.Hainton, first as a Bristol M.A. thesis and later as a published work in collaboration with A.Platts, has written a history of the development of elementary education in Gloucestershire 1648-1848. This makes extensive use of the education reports for 1818 and 1833, but does not attempt any quantification of the objectively verifiable benefits, and by its own terms of reference is unable to consider effects of the Revised Code or to make use of the material from the 1851 Educational Census.

Our main concern in this chapter is to consider those questions which can be put at a microcosmic level, namely what were the effects on literacy of the size of town or parish; what differences there were between male and female literacy; whether patterns of literacy could be established for different occupational groups and whether, using this data, we could discover whether there was any clear relationship between parental occupation and the literacy of offspring.

Our main theses in this chapter are as follows: that the substantial differences of levels of literacy in geographically adjacent parishes may be explained in terms of the occupational distribution of the sample. That, further, analysis by occupation can explain the widespread apparent discrepancies noted by various researchers using material based on 19th century surveys, and a further tentative proposition is that there are likely to be strong similarities between the literacy of discrete occupational groups in other regions of

England which had broadly similar economic and industrial conditions.

In considering the relationship between parental occupation and literacy of offspring we initially hypothesised that this would provide evidence concerning the educational decisions which parents were making and possibly an element of discrimination which they felt necessary. However, where literacy for male offspring is greater than female among some occupational groups it could indicate other factors beside the provision of elementary education: in particular, the existence of progressive education in literacy in certain trades and occupations. This is an area which we have not attempted to explore in any depth.

Chapter 4 (ii)

The evidence of the marriage records for Gloucestershire

From the experience gained in analysing the Bristol material, it was considered essential to attempt to collect the fullest possible data from Gloucestershire sources and in order to do this all of the available Parish Records or Bishop's Transcripts from 1755 to 1865 inclusive (at decennial points) were itemised as fully as possible and occupational details of bride, bridegroom and parents were included where available.

The availability of material was the only form of sampling used; for example material for 1755 was relatively slender and produced only 247 marriages; however, there was no indication that this caused any bias as far as the rural and urban balance was concerned. The numbers for the 19th century are substantial and represent the fullest literacy statistics collected for this county. The following is a tabular representation of these data.

Illiteracy in Gloucestershire 1755-1865

Year	Marriages	Male		Female		Combined
		No.	% of marks	No.	% of marks	
1755	247	111	44.9	176	71.25	58.1
1765	571	250	43.78	381	66.72	55.3
1775	598	301	50.33	408	68.22	59.3
1785	625	307	49.12	424	67.84	58.5
1795	584	270	46.23	384	65.75	56.0
1805	655	291	44.42	402	61.37	52.9
1815	1642	780	47.50	1004	61.14	54.3
1825	1944	798	41.04	1041	53.54	47.3
1835	1517	715	47.13	957	63.08	55.1
1845	1987	670	33.7	840	42.27	38.0
			(33.2)		(49.6)	
1855	1569	475	30.2	484	30.84	30.5
			(29.5)		(41.2)	
1865	1171	267	22.80	236	20.15	21.5
			(22.5)		(31.2)	

National averages in brackets

Prison Register Material

Chapter 4 (iii)

Evidence of Prison Records

According to Henry Mayhew, Gloucestershire was the most criminal of the counties outside the metropolis, having 26 convicted prisoners for each 10,000 of the population[1]. Analysis of sections of the register of those remanded in custody for trial at Gloucester Assizes for the period 1812-1844 shows that the majority of convictions were for larceny and other crimes against property.

It would be difficult to analyse in detail the whole of this material; we have therefore concentrated on the points 1815, 1825, 1835, 1839 and 1844 though data from other years have been included.

The state of education, as estimated by admission procedures, was as follows for these years:

	Not read or write	%	Read not write	%	Read and write	%	Read a little	%	Read well	%
1815	81	55.1	3	2.0	44	29.9	19	12.9		
1825	100	39.2	21	8.2	94	36.9	40	15.7		
1835	106	25.9	99	24.2	200	48.9			4	.97
1839		22.6		27.8		48.1				
1844	99	23.6	145 (Imp)	34.5	164	39.1			12	3.9

Of the 409 remanded in custody in 1835, 110, or slightly more than ¼, have a verdict entered of Not Guilty, No True Bill, or Discharged by Proclamation. Technically, then, these were not criminals, and it is of interest to see that their educational standards, in some respects, were marginally worse than those who were found guilty and subsequently sentenced. The proportion of total illiterates, for example, is slightly higher. Little is claimed for these figures except that they indicate no major differences in the educational accomplishments between those who have been found to have been criminals and those who have not. As some object to the use of 19th century criminal statistics on the grounds that criminals have lower educational standards than non-criminals, it is important to recognise that this is not necessarily so.

This is not the place in which to consider the possible influence on police, magistrates and witnesses (the citizen played a more crucial role in bringing accusations then than now) of the known or supposed low educational status of accused persons. If a detailed study of the Gloucester Assize description books showed a consistent disparity between the literacy of convicted and discharged prisoners there would be evidence to suggest that there was an element of the self-fulfilling prophecy in custodial proceedings.

More important, for our purposes, is the recognition that the majority of crimes are those against property and the majority of the accused are described as labourers. This, more than any other factor, is responsible for the apparently low literacy rate shown by 19th century rural prison records.

This may be illustrated by extracting from the 1835 admission register those designated as having an occupation other than labourer. These number 121 and their comparative accomplishments are as follows:

	Totals	% not read or write	% read not write	% read & write	% read a little
Named occupations	121	9.9	19.0	70.2	0.83
Labourers	288	35.6	26.4	36.8	1.1
Overall	409	25.9	24.2	48.9	0.97

Various clear distinctions emerge, the most important being that the ability to read and write was claimed for or by approximately twice the number of those in named occupations, as opposed to labourers. In addition there is a striking difference between those who can neither read nor write: a relatively small number of those in named occupations (9.9%); a considerable number of labourers (35.6%).

A detailed consideration of occupational literacy will be made in section (v) of this chapter, which includes detailed analyses of prison statistics for 1815, 1825 and 1835.

Prison figures are sometimes objected to on the grounds that there is a disproportionate number of juveniles included. It is true that many of those remanded in custody pending trial at Gloucester 1815-1844 were juveniles, on the other hand the average age of prisoners taken for a sample year (1844) was 25 and this is the same as the average age of bridegrooms in the 19th century.

Where direct comparisons have been made between prison data and marriage certificate data only material relating to adults has been used.

Chapter 4 (iv)

Literacy in relationship to size of parish, town and city.

Many students of literacy and notably Professor W.B.Stephens have been concerned to explore the relationship between literacy and the size of towns and parishes, and where high literacy in, for example, market towns appears, what relationship this bears to the surrounding area.

This was seen as an important objective in this study and extensive material is now available for this to be explored in sensitive detail.

For present purposes we have concentrated on examining manageable propositions and have taken as a starting point the change in patterns of literacy for a sample which includes the city of Gloucester, Cheltenham, a number of market towns, and a sample of small rural parishes.

In the following table as much material for Gloucester city as is available has been included and for the last six decadal points, summarised as an overall percentage.

Those making marks rather than signatures

Location	1755	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Gloucester:												
St. John Bapt	66.6	41.6	31.2	58.3	57.1	60	34.6	42.5	28.9	28.9	18.3	14.1
St. Mary Lode	52.8	51.6	50	57.9	45.2	44.2	49	29.2	44.1	34.2		
St. Mary Crypt							56.3	27.7	27.2	34.2	20.4	
St. Michael's							50	9	25	15.4	21.7	26
St. Nicholas							47.8	58.3	43	30.2	31.8	17.3
St. Aldate							28.5	12.5	37.5	44.4	70	
Overall percentages							45.9	35.6	38.8	29.5	22.8	16.0

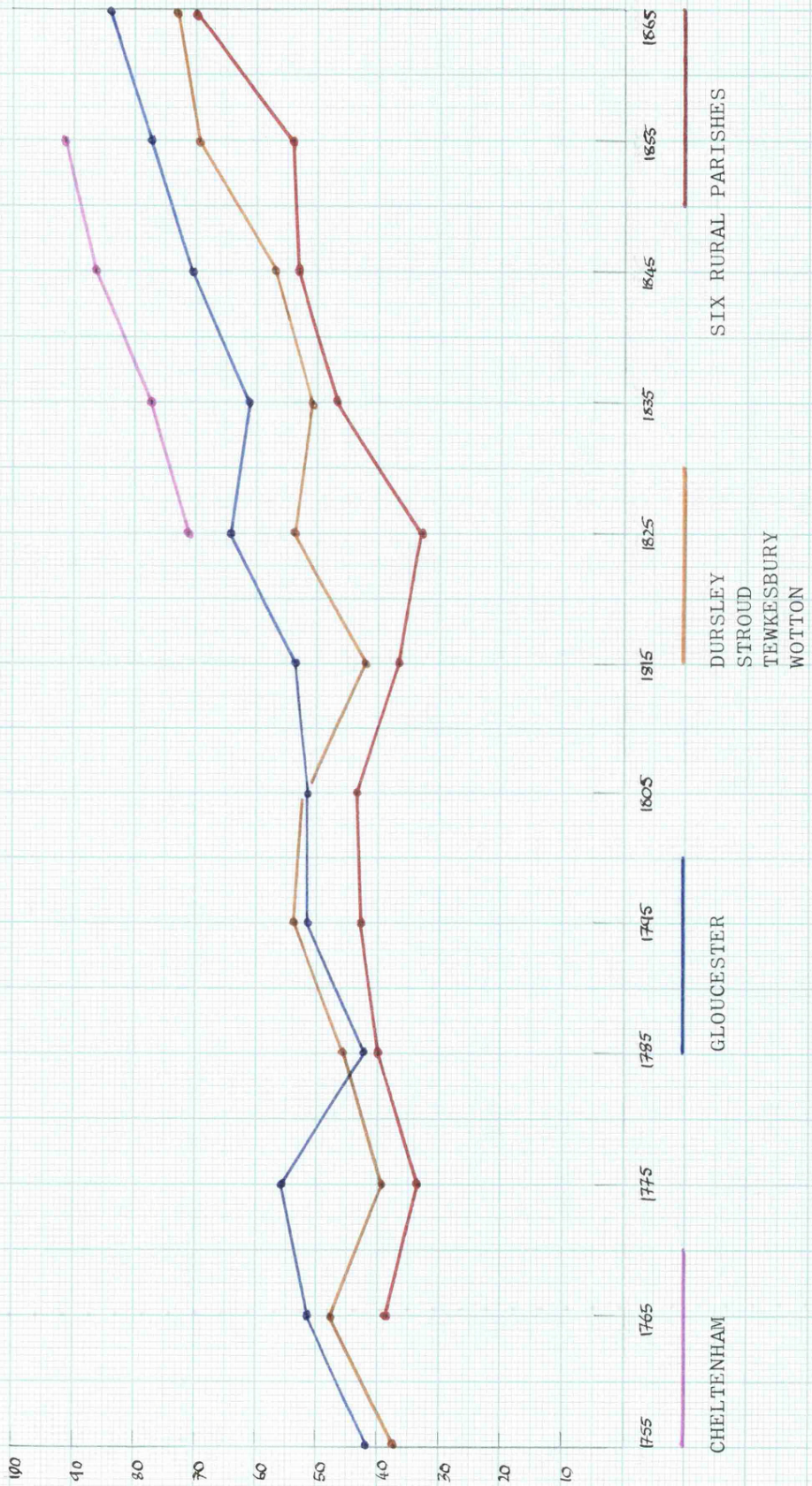
(2)

Those making marks rather than signatures

Location	1755	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Cheltenham								28.8	22.8	13.4	8.4	
Dursley	64.7	47.7	56.6	55	60.7	25.7	53.4	26.4	46.8	63.6	43.7	16.7
Tewkesbury	60	48.1	54.2	57.3	47.7	43.6	63.1	50	47.5	46.7	29.7	32.1
Wotton-u-Edge	70.8	37.5	66.7	42.8	33.3	52.3	50	48.5	54.4	49.9	45	23.3
Stroud	57.4	63.6	63.2	59.1	47.9	51.4	62.7	51.5	47.7	28.6	13.6	22.4
South Cerney		62.5	68.2	66.6	60	56.2	56.2			50		
Churchdown		50	90	66.6	71.4	68.7	50	75	35	45.6	75	
English Bicknor		46.4	81.5	77.7	68.5	62.5	76.6	50	55	41.6		
Horsley	58.3	67.5	60	60.5	45.4	54.8	70.5	65.8	70	54.2	36.6	75
Mitcheldean		66.6	80	41.7	35.7	65	20	75	25	0	75	0
Sherborne (Glos.)		71.2	58.3	33.3	57.1	21.4	37.5	75	0	50	33.3	0

(2)

GRAPH 3 144A Comparative literacy of Gloucestershire Towns and Parishes 1755-1865



In the graph opposite which represents these figures we see that Cheltenham, the largest town, stands out clearly. Gloucester itself for most of the 19th century shows a superiority above the four sample market towns though there are decennial periods at the end of the 18th century when signature literacy is lower than that of these towns.

The four market towns tend to follow the movement of the rural parishes until 1815; thereafter increases in signature literacy are comparable with those in Gloucester city, though the difference of approximately 10% remains.

As the graph demonstrates, throughout most of the period there are clear divisions between these four areas and, as elsewhere argued, these reflect the occupational composition of these areas as well as formal and informal educational input.

Despite the considerable differences between individual parishes in the city (cf. our findings in Bristol parishes) there is a substantial decline in the fifty years 1815-1865 of those signing with marks: by 1865 over 80% are literate. However, the figures for Cheltenham, the largest town in Gloucestershire throughout the 19th century, are better than this and show the exceptionally low percentage of marks of 8.4% as early as 1855.

Both Gloucester and Cheltenham tend to be better than other towns in Gloucestershire, though Stroud produces the low figure of 13.6% of marks for 1855, but shows substantially worse figures for 1865.

For the foregoing the total numbers of the sample are substantial: the same cannot be claimed for the small rural parishes which follow, where frequently fewer than two marriages were celebrated in any one year.

Another means of examining patterns of literacy in Gloucestershire is attempted in the following formalised maps which show the comparative literacy rates of parishes adjacent to a large town, Cheltenham; a market town, Tewkesbury; and the area of West Dean in the Forest of Dean. In each case all the available figures have been included and where there are blanks it must be assumed that records or Bishop's transcripts for these places or years were not obtainable in the Gloucester Archive collection.

The first deals with Cheltenham, which, as indicated earlier, shows the highest literacy rates in Gloucestershire in the 19th century. Some adjacent parishes, particularly Leckhampton and Badgeworth, show similarly good and, towards the end of the period, better rates than Cheltenham itself. Others, notably Boddington and Staverton, have considerably lower rates. In accounting for this it is to the occupational composition of the groups rather than educational provision to which we look. The very low figure of 2.5% of marks for 1865 in Leckhampton is, for example, produced by the following: of 20 males who married only two were labourers and they and all the other males, many of the professional classes, signed the register: as did all but one of the brides.

Conversely, when we look at the much smaller parish of Boddington and analyse the relatively high figure of 62.5% for 1855 we find that four couples were married in that year. Two labourers and a farm-servant signed with marks; a farmer signed his name; two of the four brides were able to sign.

Tewkesbury itself, after a steep rise in the number of marks in 1815, shows a progressive decrease thereafter, except for 1865 when there is a 3.6% increase. These figures have been analysed elsewhere in this chapter.

The surrounding parishes return similar figures for the period, though small samples at Deerhurst. Forthampton and Elmstone-Hardwicke can produce 100% mark percentages when there are one or two marriages and the bridegrooms and brides come from labouring families.

The figure of 43.7% for Elmstone-Hardwicke is of interest and can be analysed as follows: of eight marriages, six bridegrooms were labourers: four of these signed with marks, the other two wrote their names, as did a stone-cutter and a plasterer. Half of the brides were able to sign their names.

Our last example shows part of the Forest of Dean and its surrounding parishes. The figures for West Dean itself are not substantially worse than Tewkesbury but some of those from adjacent parishes, particularly Newland and St. Briavels in 1855,are noticeably low. Analysis of the Newland register shows that of 13 couples, five bridegrooms and ten brides signed with a mark. Of the former, three were miners, one a labourer, and one a yeoman. Of the women six were daughters of colliers or labourers.

In the 1855 St. Briavels register, four couples were married; only one woman was able to sign, and no men. Three of the latter were labourers and one a miner.

Our main inference concerning the apparently higher literacy rates for towns as opposed to rural areas in Gloucestershire is that it is the occupational composition of the groups which produces high or low rates. In cities and towns of the status of Cheltenham and its suburb Leckhampton, large proportions of tradesmen, and members of professional and artisan groups with small numbers of representatives of the labouring groups give high literacy figures.

In towns of the size and character of Tewkesbury the balance of these groups is somewhat different: there are higher proportions of labourers and the figures reflect this. In rural and mining areas, where the majority of the population are engaged as agricultural labourers or miners, the literacy rates are generally low or very low.

CHELTENHAM AND ADJACENT PARISHES

ILLITERACY BY PERCENTAGE OF MARKS 1755-1865

SWINDON (GLOS)

1815	
1825	83.3
1835	10
1845	25
1855	0
1865	

BODDINGTON

1815	75
1825	60
1835	
1845	75
1855	62.5
1865	

PRESTBURY

1815	64.2
1825	0
1835	33.3
1845	15.4
1855	20.6
1865	0

STAVERTON

1815	83.3
1825	50
1835	
1845	0
1855	50
1865	

SEVENHAMPTON

1815	50
1825	50
1835	50
1845	0
1855	
1865	40

CHELTENHAM

1815	
1825	28.8
1835	22.8
1845	13.4
1855	8.4
1865	

WHITTINGTON

1815	
1825	83.3
1835	100
1845	
1855	0
1865	0

UP HATHERLEY

1815	
1825	
1835	
1845	
1855	
1865	

DOWDESWELL

1815	25
1825	100
1835	83.3
1845	0
1855	
1865	

COBERLEY

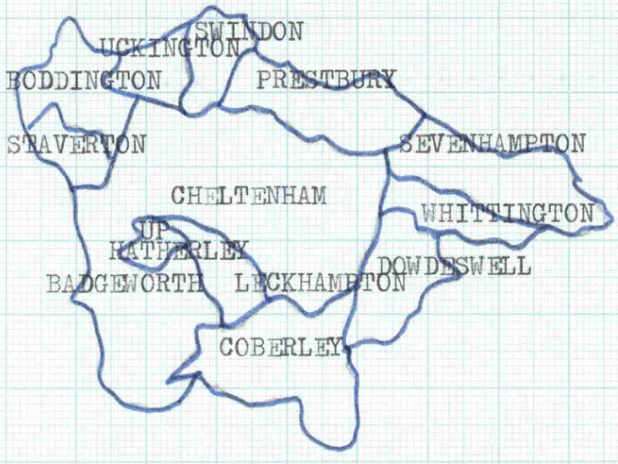
1815	
1825	
1835	
1845	
1855	
1865	

LECKHAMPTON

1815	80
1825	25
1835	40
1845	30
1855	7.1
1865	

BADGEWORTH

1815	80
1825	25
1835	40
1845	30
1855	7.1
1865	



TEWKESBURY AND ADJACENT PARISHES

ILLITERACY BY PERCENTAGES OF MARKS 1755-1865

TWYNING

1815	61.1
1825	42.8
1835	60
1845	75
1855	12.5
1865	37.5

ASHCHURCH

1815	70
1825	66.6
1835	50
1845	30
1855	33.3
1865	

FORTHAMPTON

1815	100
1825	100
1835	100
1845	37.5
1855	
1865	

TEWKESBURY

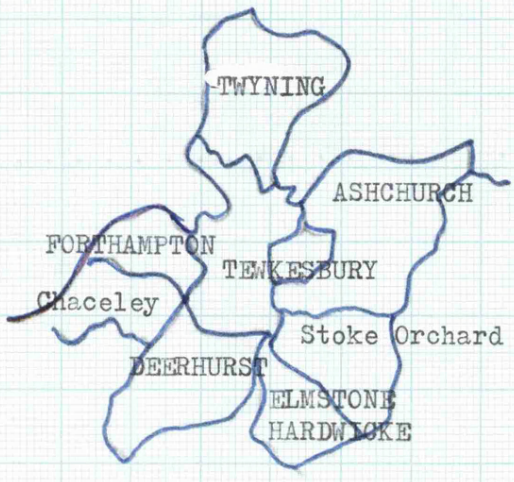
1755	60	1815	63.1
1765	48.1	1825	50
1775	54.2	1835	47.5
1785	57.3	1845	46.7
1795	47.7	1855	29.7
1805	43.6	1865	32.1

DEERHURST

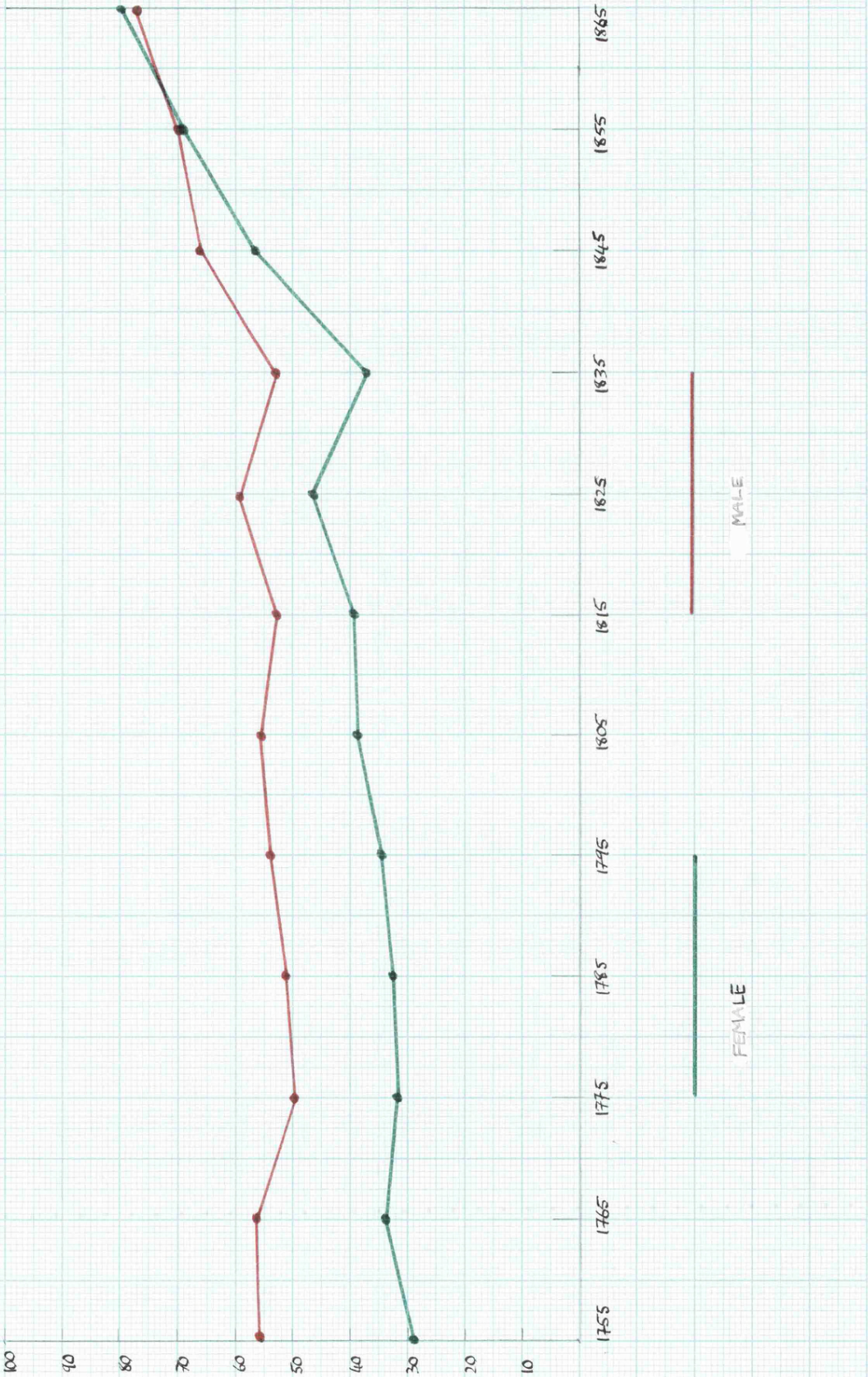
1755		1815	50
1765	66.6	1825	75
1775	64.3	1835	61.1
1785	66.6	1845	33.3
1795	44.4	1855	100
1805	57.1	1865	100

ELMSTONE HARDWICKE

1755		1815	20
1765	85.7	1825	100
1775	50	1835	
1785	80	1845	100
1795	83.3	1855	100
1805	50	1865	43.7



GRAPH 4 147a Development of literacy in Gloucestershire 1755–1865



Chapter 4 (v)

(a) Literacy and male/female variations. Gloucestershire.

Female literacy in Gloucestershire between 1755 and 1815 did not rise above 40%; thereafter there is an improvement, albeit somewhat erratic, which accelerates rapidly from 1845 onwards. Throughout much of the period under study there was a substantial difference between male and female literacy, though, as the graph opposite shows clearly, this difference narrows so that the percentage difference of 26.4% in 1755 is reduced to 17% in 1815. At some stage between 1855 and 1865 the number of women able to sign the marriage register becomes greater than the number of men. The educational provision and response which came after 1830, while bringing benefit to male and female alike, had a particularly important effect on the standards of literacy of women. It should be noted that female literacy for Gloucestershire was substantially higher (by approximately 10%) than the national average in 1845, 1855 and 1865.

There is no strong indication that the provision of charity or fee-paying schools in Gloucestershire prior to 1833 militated against girls or forced a restricted curriculum (without the option of learning writing) upon them. However, where charity schooling was scarce (and its provision was concentrated in larger population centres), fee-paying schools were the main formal educational agents. Such fees, though basically low, undoubtedly were a disincentive to low-paid workers to send their children to school either for any period at all, or for long enough to acquire an educational standard sufficient to write with a reasonable degree of confidence. If this is a plausible proposition as applied to the education of boys, it applies with perhaps more force to the education of girls, for although boys might be employable at an early age in certain industries and might supplement the family income, girls were more likely to be kept at home to help with housework and younger children.

It is possible to consider this proposition in more detail by analysing marriage records after 1840, by which time the occupation of both parents was required in addition to that of the bride and bridegroom.

In the first place it was considered to be helpful to separate the parental occupations into three main groups. These are occupational groups and are not intended to represent social categories.

GROUP 1 Those designated Gentleman, Esq., Yeomen, Army or Naval officers, lawyers, clergymen and farmers.

GROUP 2 All occupations not falling within Groups 1 or 3.

GROUP 3 Labourers, watermen and coal-miners only.

As may be seen, group 1 mainly consists of professional groups; group 3 of heavy manual workers, with a large number of at present undifferentiated occupations falling into group 2. It is hoped that the usefulness of this categorisation will be made progressively clearer.

The analysis distinguished between towns and parishes in three categories:

(1) Those below 1,000

(2) Those between 1,000 and 5,000

(3) Those above 5,000

using the population figures contained in the 1833 Abstract of Education Returns. In order to keep the work to manageable proportions the decennial intervals 1845, 1855 and 1865 were selected. However, the findings relate to all the Gloucestershire marriage records for these years available in the Gloucester Archive collection.

MALE AND FEMALE LITERACY BY PARENTAL OCCUPATION GROUPS GLOUCESTERSHIRE 1845-1865

	A POPULATION LESS THAN 1,000						B 1,000 - 5,000						C ABOVE 5,000					
1845	GROUP 1		2		3		GROUP 1		2		3		GROUP 1		2		3	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	88.8	96	78.2	65.7	35.6	34.2	87	96.9	66.3	59.1	33.2	27.8	95.8	97	86	76.4	52.2	39.
1855	95.1	96.5	84.8	79	41.3	53.2	98	98	79.5	69	45.7	40	95.2	97.7	90	83.6	56.5	559
1865	93.2	97.7	88.6	89.4	53.1	62.6	88.9	100	80	84	50	64.8	97.5	96.1	89*	86.1	68.9	67.3

* 89.7

One of the most obvious, and least surprising, of the results of this analysis is that the incidence of literacy among offspring of group 1 is high throughout the period. Of interest, however, is the finding that, with the exception of the 1865 figure for large towns, the percentage of literate females in this group is always higher than the male equivalent. This slight superiority is the result of a higher percentage of literate female offspring of farmers compared with male offspring and appears to indicate that daughters of farmers were allowed to pursue their education longer than their brothers. The numbers are too small to justify more than this tentative proposition.

It is interesting to see that female literacy for offspring of group 1 remains consistent for the period 1845-1865 and varies little according to the nature of the locality.

Parents of children in remote rural areas devoid of schools for much of this time are as able, it seems, to obtain this degree of education for them as their counterparts in the larger and, often, educationally well-endowed urban areas of the county.

When we turn to the numerically larger group 2, we find a greater diversity both in regional and parental response. From the figures for 1845 to 1865 literacy varies considerably, though for 1845 and 1855 the rank order remains the same. A clear inference from the 1845 figures is that for the three types of area male literacy always exceeds female: in areas A by as much as 12.5%. The highest figure of 86%, for males in areas C, shows that by 1845 literacy among offspring of artisan groups was already high and in Cheltenham, the largest and the most cosmopolitan of the Gloucestershire towns, even higher than this, namely 94%.

The offspring of group 3, however, are considerably less favourably placed. Literacy rates for them do not rise above 52% in 1845 and are as low as 27.8 (females in Areas B). Whereas we can make a clear inference that parents in group 2 were making deliberate decisions about the quality and quantity of

their children's education, there is a strong suggestion at least in areas A and B that the children of labourers and affiliants were equally disadvantaged, regardless of their sex, in elementary education. Although this group made considerable strides towards literacy before the general provision of free education, arguably it was here that the 1870 Act made the largest contribution.

It is noticeable that male literacy for group 3 in areas C is substantially higher than areas A and B. However, this figure is distorted by the Cheltenham figures, which show a remarkable 74% of male literacy for 1845. This is explicable in several ways: the quality of educational provision, the movement of better-educated males to such urban centres and the relative paucity of trades and industries which might attract juvenile labour.

The figures for Gloucester itself show that at 37.7 for male literacy, children of labourers were scarcely better off, educationally, than their counterparts in small towns and parishes. Except, that is, where there was no educational provision at all. If we look at four of the largest parishes which had no school provision according to the 1833 Abstract of Educational Returns, we see from the marriage records of 1845 the following:

Charfield)
Corse)
Elmstone Hardwicke)
Hewelsfield)

MALE	GROUP 1		GROUP 2		GROUP 3	
	LIT	ILLIT	LIT	ILLIT	LIT	ILLIT
Totals	1	1	9	0	2	14
%ages	50	50	100	0	12.5	87.5
FEMALE						
Totals	-	-	6	6	3	11
%ages	-	-	50	50	21.4	78.6

(Totals of male and female are not equal, as parental occupations are not given in some instances.)

As we see from these figures, where there was no educational provision, children of labourers were extremely disadvantaged, whereas all of the male offspring of group 2 were literate and half of the female offspring of such were literate.

The figures for 1855 show substantial gains in literacy for offspring of parents in group 2. In males there is a particularly noticeable improvement in areas B, a gain of 13.2%. There is a similarly impressive gain of 13.3% in female literacy in areas A. However, among offspring of group 2 parents, there still appears to be a disparity between male and female literacy, though the gap is closing. In group 3, on the other hand, considerable changes have occurred, especially in the relative literacy of males and females. In areas A female literacy has substantially overtaken male literacy, and there has been a considerable narrowing of the gap in areas B and C.

The figures for 1865 show interesting developments, especially among groups 2 and 3. In group 1 the high level of literacy shown throughout the period is maintained. In group 2 there has been a slight but significant shift, in areas A and B, from male dominance in literacy to female dominance. The gain is small, that is 0.8% in areas A and 4% in areas B. In towns larger than 5,000 male superiority is maintained, though with a reduction from the 1855 figures.

The trend towards female superiority in group 3 noted in 1855 is continued in 1865 in areas A and B, but in areas C male literacy narrowly retains superiority.

It would seem that in Gloucestershire as a whole from approximately 1840 onwards more female children of labouring groups in towns and parishes of less than 5,000 were being educated to a higher standard than their brothers. This would suggest that, for reasons already discussed, girls stayed at school longer or were able to gain a greater educational standard, perhaps as the result of their increased maturity. Sargent[3] noted that generally speaking male literacy was superior but that in some agricultural counties the proportion is reversed:

"Boys go early into the fields, and leave their sisters at school." This seems broadly true of Gloucestershire, but it should be noted that it does not happen in larger parishes and towns; although the margin narrows considerably: to a mere 1.6% in the case of group 3, but male literacy remains narrowly greater.

From this view of Gloucestershire as a whole, we can focus down on one siz able market town, namely Tewkesbury.

The population of Tewkesbury in 1800 was 3,037[4]. (of whom over ⅓ were employed in agriculture) and in 1833 5,780. At that time it had 14 daily schools, including a Grammar School containing six males; a Lancasterian school (with a lending library attached) containing 140 males and 50 females; the other 12 schools provided for 145 males and 95 females. Additionally there were two boarding schools where 20 males and 35 females were educated at the expense of their parents; one day and Sunday National School containing 138 males and 62 females daily, and 11 of the former and 12 of the latter in addition on Sundays. There were also three Sunday Schools providing for approximately 280 males and 180 females controlled by Baptists, Independents, and Methodists[5].

There appears to have been some imbalance between the number of girls and boys being educated at this time. However, by 1851 789 boys and 744 girls were stated to be attending day schools in Tewkesbury, so we see that the discrepancy had been corrected.[6]

Although Tewkesbury was essentially a market town, it was also an important trade centre, goods being conveyed by land and water, and it specialised in machine-knitted stockings. Until the turn of this century it appears to have been a good example of a largely self-contained town, large enough to provide most of its immediate needs. Just large enough, also, to have a small printing company towards the end of the eighteenth century, some of the products of which we shall consider in chapter 5.

Although outwardly giving the appearance of a Georgian town, a view from the tower of the Abbey shows clearly the late mediaeval construction of the surrounding houses and the narrow alleyways and courts where as late as the 1920's scores of families lived in squalor but in close proximity to the superior houses bordering the main streets.

Literacy in Tewkesbury

TEWKESBURY 1755-1865

	Male % by mark	Female % by mark	Total number of marriages
1755	40	80	60
1765	48.1	48.1	54
1775	37.5	70.8	48
1785	36.8	73.5	68
1795	27.3	68.2	44
1805	29.8	57.4	94
1815	56.1	70.2	114
1825	37.5	62.5	80
1835	39	56.1	82
1845	36.7	56.7	60
1850	41	61.5	78
1855	29.7	29.7	74
1860	22.9	27.1	96
1865	29.6	34	106

As the table shows clearly, between 1755 and 1865 there were considerable fluctuations in the relative literacy of brides and bridegrooms. At a later stage in the period it is possible to analyse these fluctuations in terms of parental occupation for, before universal schooling, this appears to have been a strong factor in determining the educational accomplishments of children.

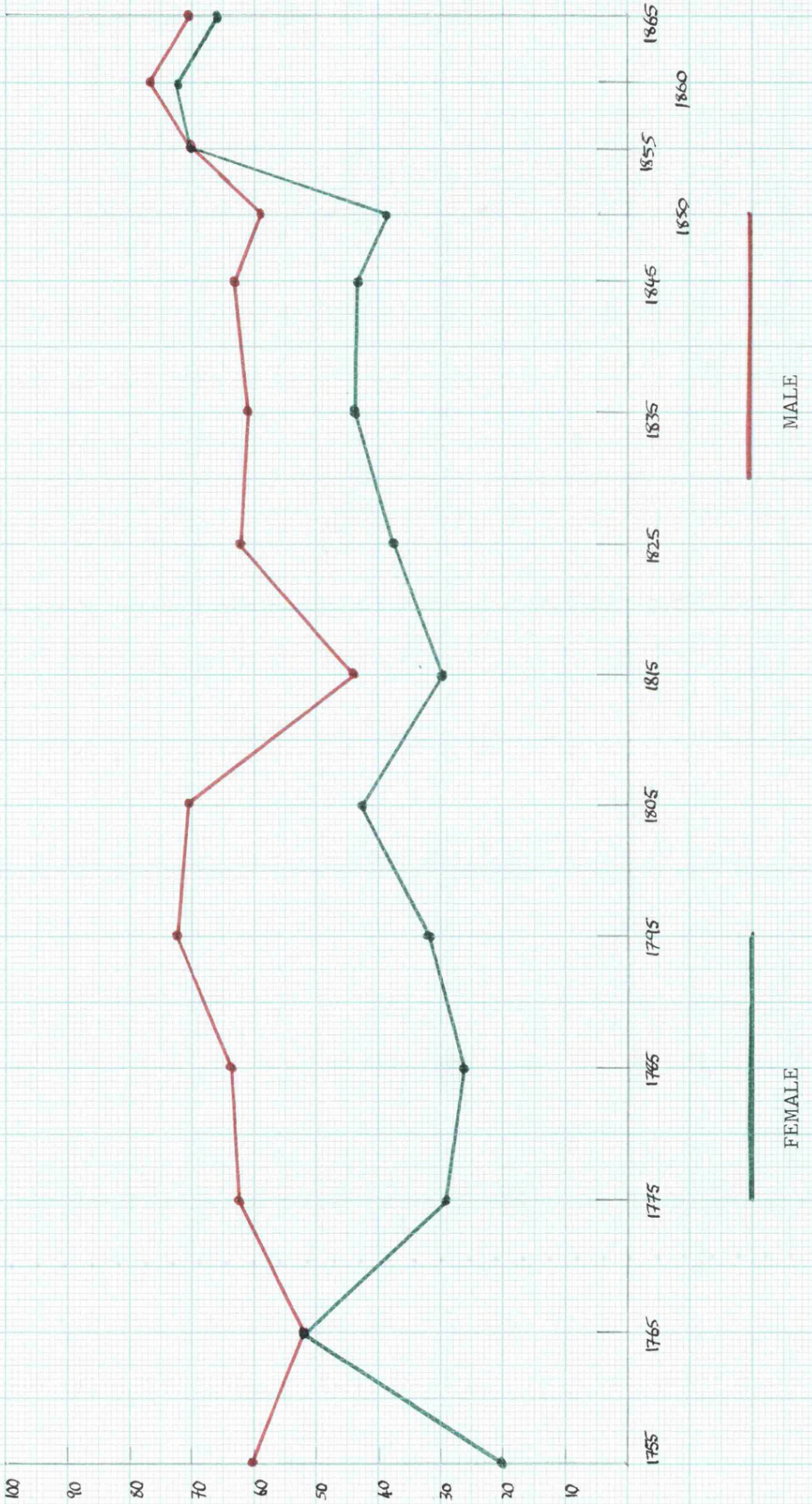
Although at most stages throughout the period there is a substantial difference in male and female literacy, there is an unusual and untypical

equalisation of literacy in 1765. As marriage certificates show no indication of parental occupation at this time, it is not possible to attempt an explanation, but one hypothesis might be that a higher than usual proportion of brides came from what we have called groups 1 and 2.

After 1850 there is a rapid improvement in the relative literacy of women and this is an accurate microcosmic reproduction of the position in Gloucestershire as a whole. Taking Tewkesbury as a paradigm, it is possible to analyse this trend in greater detail.

Throughout the period 1845-1865, as we can see from the following table, the daughters of group 1 parents were literate, without exception. Although this is a small sample, it concurs with our findings for much larger samples for the whole of the county. In group 3 the very low literacy figure of 12.5% is returned for 1845.

GRAPH 5 156a TEWKESBURY: Male and female literacy 1755-1865



TEWKESBURY - FEMALE LITERACY BY PATERNAL OCCUPATIONS

		1845			1855			1865		
		TOTAL	% LIT	% ILLIT	TOTAL	% LIT	% ILLIT	TOTAL	% LIT	% ILLIT
Group 1										
Gentlemen Yeomen Farmers		1	100		2	100		1	100	
Agricultural	Farm bailiff				1	100				
	Gardener	1	100		3	100		1		100
	Hay-cutter				1	100				
Woodworker	Cabinet-maker	1	100							
	Carpenter	2		100	1		100	1		100
	Sawyer	2		100				3	33.3	66.6
Metalworker	Whitesmith	3	66.6	33.3						
	Nailer							1	100	
Shoemaker		1		100				1	100	
Textile worker	Stocking knitter	3		100	2	50	50	5	40	60
	Tailor	1	100							
	Hosier				1	100				
	Sailmaker				1		100	1		100
Prison-keeper		1	100							
Clergyman		2	100							
Clerk		1	100		1	100				
Painter		1	100							

		1845		1855			1865		
	TOTAL	% LIT	% ILLIT	TOTAL	% LIT	% ILLIT	TOTAL	% LIT	% ILLIT
Mason				1		100			
Brewer							1	100	
Baker				1	100				
Butcher							1	100	
Hawker	1		100						
Carrier							2	100	
Postman							1	100	
Innkeeper	4	100							
Grocer				1	100				
Chemist							1	100	
Servant				1	100				
Railway contractor				1	100				
Wine merchant							1	100	
Malt-maker							1	100	
Hairdresser							1	100	
Draper							1	100	
Ostler							1		100
Brickmaker							1	100	
Bricklayer							2	100	
Fishermen							1	100	
Coachbuilder							1	100	
	21	52.4	47.6	19	78.9	21.1	30	73.3	26.7
Labourers, watermen	8	12.5	87.5	17	52.9	47.1	19	52.6	47.4

In the two subsequent decades the respective percentages of 52.9% and 52.6% show a considerable improvement on 1845, but no progressive gain.

In group 2 there is a substantial increase between 1845 and 1855, followed by a slight decline. When we analyse these figures further we find some interesting variations within groups of occupations. Within the textile trade, for example, we see that in 1845 all of the daughters of stocking-knitters were illiterate; this decreased to 50% in 1855 and increased again, slightly, to 60% in 1865. The small sample of tailors' daughters show 100% literacy within the period, whereas sailmakers' daughters remain illiterate throughout the period.

Similarly, within the woodworking trade, subdivision shows some variation as expressed in daughters' literacy: a cabinet-maker's daughter is literate; carpenters' daughters register 100% illiteracy throughout the period; sawyers' gradually improve from 100% illiteracy to 66.6% illiteracy.

Daughters of fathers in retail trades show 100% literacy throughout the period. There is, then, a clearly defined pattern of literacy relating to parental occupation and income during this period.

There is a similar pattern discernible in the literacy of men when grouped in parental occupations. The following table shows the results of analysing Tewkesbury marriage records for 5 quinquennial intervals. With the exception of 1850, it is apparent that male offspring of all occupations other than labourers and watermen have a high literacy rate, though it diminishes slightly as the period progresses.

Tewkesbury literacy of males by parental occupational groups

	1845			1850			1855			1859			1865		
	Lit	Illit	S	L	I	S	L	I	S	L	I	S	L	I	S
Agricultural	50	50	2	100		1	66.3	33.3	3	100		2	100		1
Woodworkers				100		4	100	0	3	75	25	4	66.7	33.3	3
Trades, Services	100		9	50	50	12	90	10	10	92.3	7.7	13	93.3	7.7	15
Metalworkers	100	0	3	-		-	100	0	2	100	0	2	66.7	33.3	3
Shoemakers	100	0	1			-	100	0	2	85.7	14.3	7	75	25	4
Textile Workers	100	0	1	50	50	6	100	0	3	100	0	3	-	-	
Professional	100	0	2	100	0	2					-		100	0	2
Soldier		-			-		100	0	1		-		0	100	1
Labourers & Watermen	30	70	10	41.6	58.3	12	23.1	76.9	13	47.1	52.9	17	54.2	45.8	24
Occupations other than labourers	94.4	5.6	18	62.5	37.5	24	91.7	8.3	24	90.3	9.7	31	82.8	17.2	29

Male children of labourers and watermen show extremely low literacy rates for much of the period with a gradual improvement for the last two quinquennial samples. By comparing these tables for 1845, 1855 and 1865 we can see that female children of the same group, after an extremely low literacy figure (12.5%), make rapid progress and, as in the figures for Gloucestershire as a whole, gain superiority in literacy for this occupational group.

Conversely, we find that the male children of named occupations achieve higher literacy rates than female, and it is possible to see where this imbalance is most strongly manifested. It appears, for example, that female children of woodworkers and textile workers in particular fare worse in this respect than their male equivalents. There appears to be some indication that, in a town of this size, artisans , particularly those in the category of self-employed, are more prepared to pay the pence for schooling and forego the services of their sons than to make similar pecuniary sacrifices for their daughters. As we have seen from the 1833 Abstract of Educational Returns, the number of girls in day schools was less than half that for boys. It is reasonable that this reflected parental demand as much as original provision. In this respect Tewkesbury follows the pattern of other large Gloucestershire towns which we have considered earlier, that is in showing higher literacy rates for male children of group 2 occupations throughout the period in question.

In the light of the foregoing it is of interest to consider opinions expressed by the Reverend H.W.Bellairs HMI in his 1852 report for the Western Counties, based on visits to 210 schools, 114 of which were in Gloucestershire and Bristol[7]. He argued the case for schools to make realistic changes of fees, based, if the school was in a parish of 800 or more, on the principle of self-sufficiency. He considered that farmers and tradesmen would not send their children to schools where the payments were "confined to the small sum adapted to the circumstances of the labouring poor." He also believed that

without compulsory attendance it was absurd to suppose that the majority of the poor would send their children to day schools who could earn a half, a quarter or a sixth of that earned by their fathers. His logical progression was to consider the value of night schools to remedy this unsatisfactory situation. However, as far as Tewkesbury is concerned, by 1851 the number of children at school formed a larger proportion of the population than in 1833. This is reflected to a considerable extent in the evidence from marriage records in 1865. As can be seen from the tables, by that time 73.3% of women and 82.8% of men from parents in occupational group 2 had reached a measurable educational standard. Although those from Group 3 produce worse figures than these, we see that women from Group 3 backgrounds have achieved a literacy rate of 52.6% and men of 54.2%.

Evidence from other rural areas which had similar overall literacy patterns to Gloucestershire, namely Wiltshire, Dorset, Devon and Somerset, pointed to a considerable deficiency in the ability of women to read and write, as estimated in the early 1840's[8]. This is supported by figures for Gloucestershire for 1845, which show rates of illiteracy as high as 75.2% for areas with populations of 1,000-5,000, and, as we have seen, in Tewkesbury as high as 87.5 (from a small sample) for daughters of occupational group 3.

The century saw a considerable improvement for the poorest classes, and as we have seen, in Gloucestershire as a whole female literacy among this group was by 1865 higher than male literacy. However, in Group 2 men retained their lead, and in a town of moderate size such as Tewkesbury male literacy was as high as 94.4% as early as 1845: the highest point from 1845 to 1865, in fact. In Gloucestershire as a whole the situation varies according to the size of the parish or town; in areas with fewer than 1,000 or between 1,000 and 5,000 females from occupational group 2 showed by 1865 a superior ability as judged by marriage signatures; in towns larger than 5,000 men narrowly continued their superiority by 89.7: 86.1%.

In Chapter 3 we noted the possibility that substantial numbers may have gained literacy after childhood. It is conceivable that this would apply more markedly to men than women since many of the former, as Dr. Frayling has suggested, would have been engaged in trades which generated their own educational levels. It would follow, then, that the ability to read craft manuals would be an almost unavoidable necessity for many trades, though arguably skills of translating diagrams into concrete objects would be more important than decoding print. It was possible, for example, for the engineer-designer George Stephenson, though illiterate, to project and execute the plans for his prize-winning locomotive in 1829.

In this chapter we have seen that the sons of parents engaged in certain occupations, notably woodworking and weaving, showed higher literacy levels at marriage than daughters. We have tended to assume that this was the result of deliberate parental discrimination in favour of the education of boys, but this is by no means proven. It is equally possible that sons of some artisans, having ended their childhood with no greater accomplishments than their 'sisters', then entered the same or cognate trades as their fathers which contained implicit educational objectives and opportunities.

Some of the anecdotal material considered in chapr 5 notably the experience of James Lackington, shows how this could be achieved. What is difficult to determine is the scale on which this progressive education in literacy operated, for the figures which we have given, although claimed to be accurate, are open to more than one interpretation.

Chapter 4 (vi)

Literacy by occupational groups - Gloucestershire

Our two sources for the literacy of occupational groups are the register of prisoners remanded in custody pending trial at Gloucester Assizes and the parish records of Gloucestershire. Despite some objections which may remain as to the validity of the former, they help to extend our knowledge at least of broad trends in occupational literacy for Gloucestershire, before occupational information is generally available on marriage certificates. After 1839 it is generally possible to find this information in marriage records and we have concentrated our main search on the three decennial points 1845, 1855, 1865.

Although some information is available from both sources concerning occupations of women, it is an extremely small proportion in the case of prison records and sporadic and inconsistent in marriage records. Consequently we have confined this section, as in considering the Bristol evidence, to males.

One important objective seemed to be to determine the educational standards of agricultural labourers during the 19th century. Contemporary observers were divided on this issue, and whereas limited surveys made mainly in the 1830's and 1840's suggested low literacy rates and Professor Fawcett is quoted by R.L.Sargant[9] as believing that "the agricultural population as a general rule can neither read nor write", others, including Sargant, convinced themselves by a comparison of the statistics of agricultural and industrial counties or by the verbal testimonies of farmers that the position was less extreme. To get, it is hoped, nearer to actuality, we have extracted details of labourers domiciled in Gloucestershire from Prison Registers for 1815, 1825, 1835, 1839 and 1844 and all labourers from the marriage records available for 1839, 1845, 1855 and 1865. The following table shows the resulting data.

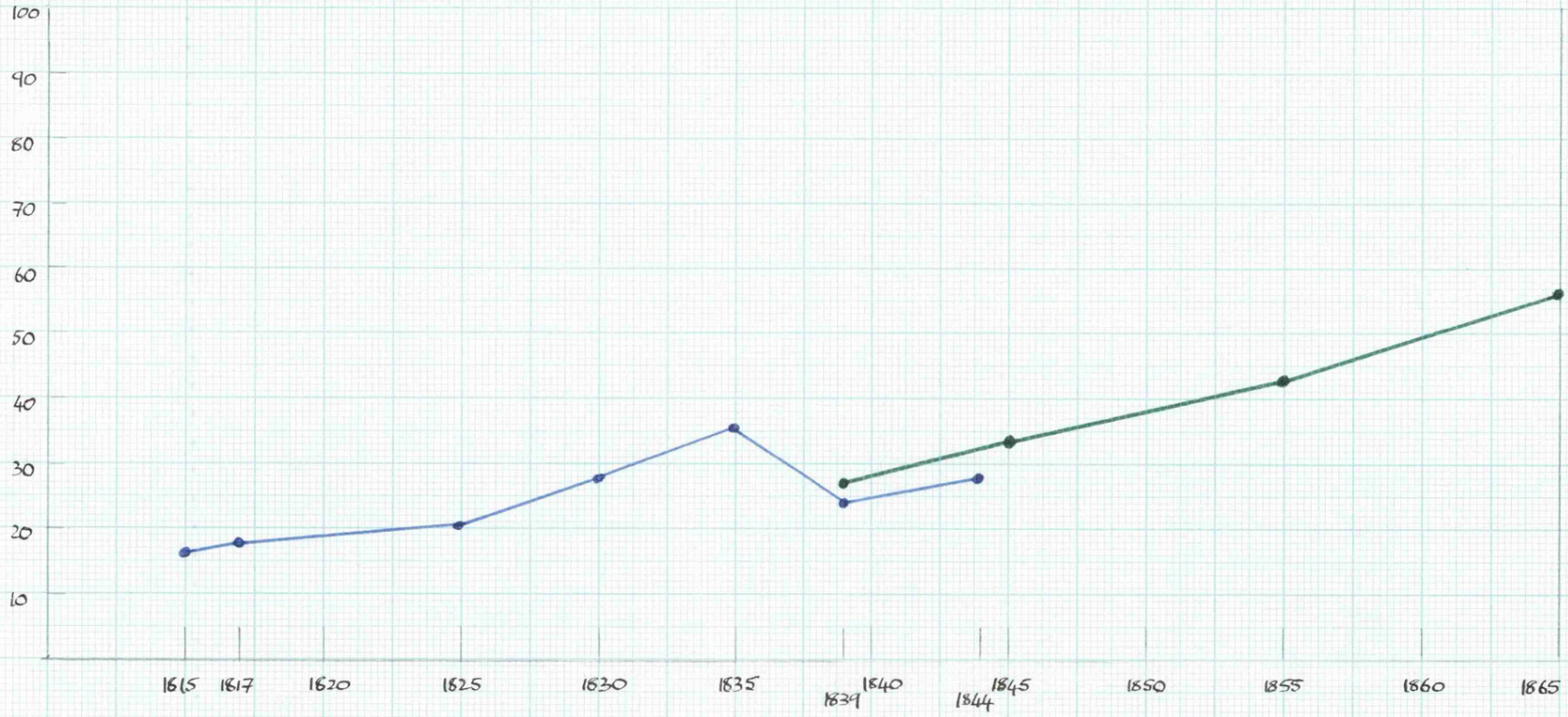
Gloucestershire - born male labourers from prison records, aged 18 or above

	Read & W	Read only	Neither R/W	R/W well	Number
1815	15.6	20	64.4		90
1817	17.4	27.5	55.0		109
1825	20.2	26.9	52.9		104
1830	27.5	31.7	40.8		120
1835	35.2	28.5	36.4		165
1839	22.6	27.8	48.1	1.5	133
1844	28.2	38.5	33.3		117

Gloucestershire - born male labourers from parish registers

	Able to sign		
1839	26.8		398
1845	33.6		663
1855	42.2		583
1865	55.8		336

GRAPH 6 165a Male adult Gloucestershire Labourers able to write 1815–1865



Source: prison records

Source: marriage registers

As can be seen the numbers able to read and write, although fluctuating in 1835 and 1839, show a progressive improvement from the extremely low figure of 15.6% in 1815.

For reasons given elsewhere, the occupational data relating to literacy for prisons and marriage registers in Gloucestershire do not coincide for more than a few years; however, it has been possible to extract figures from both sources for 1839 and from prison registers for 1844 (when they cease) and 1845 from marriage registers. As can be seen, the figures for Gloucestershire labourers for 1839 are 24.1% able to write (prisoners) and 26.8% able to write a signature (parish registers); a difference of 2.7% in favour of the latter. A slightly greater difference, that is, 5.2%, is shown in the 1844/1845 figures. There is no reason to suppose that a full analysis of data from both sources for the coinciding years would give a substantially greater differential. These similarities strongly suggest that prison statistics can be helpful where the occupational composition is known or can be projected with some accuracy.

When a substantial occupational group can be extracted it is not likely to show significantly worse literacy percentages, as we have demonstrated, than those of their contemporaries. This has at least one further implication, namely that where contemporary analyses of 19th century educational abilities of prisoners were attempted, the proportions capable of various skills should help us to establish more precisely the statistical significance of the ability to write a signature.

The combination of prison figures and marriage data enables us to give a clear profile of the state of literacy of the male Gloucestershire labourer for the greater part of the 19th century.

The substantial decline shown in 1839 is comparable to the overall figures for Gloucestershire for 1835 and both may reflect the state of educational provision in the 1820's and possibly increased availability of labour suitable

for children. What we cannot say for certain was whether this decline in literacy was confined to the labouring classes or whether more generally experienced. Prison figures for 1835 show that literacy figures for non-labouring groups are high, at 80%, but there is no reason to suppose that this would have been true of the county as a whole, although our first parochial figures (for 1845) for non-labouring groups are nearly 90% overall.

If our figures for agricultural labourers in Gloucestershire are a reasonably accurate reflection of the change in their educational fortunes during the period, we can infer that from a very low base-line in 1815 they had achieved just over 50% literacy by 1865: a substantial improvement, it is true, but still considerably behind their contemporaries in different occupational groups.

It is possible to compare these figures with some contemporary assessments and quantifications. In the mid-thirties a Gloucestershire farmer claimed that most of his labourers could read and that "the rising generation of poor classes in his part of the country could almost universally read and frequently write."[10] Our prison statistics show that in 1835 35.2% of labourers were believed to be able to write and 64.9% to read. (We should enter the caveat that 1835 appears to be rather better than one would expect from the average incremental increase.) Although one would treat any statement by a farmer about his labourers with some scepticism, this estimate does not seem grossly at variance with his assessment. It is difficult to find collateral numerical evidence relating to Gloucestershire in Parliamentary Reports. However, some numerical data relating to agricultural labourers in other Southern counties are of interest. In the early 1840's an analysis of the educational state of 100 juvenile farm labourers (aged between 7 and 18) was made in Dorset. The percentage of those able to write was 26%; those able to read 61%[11].

Other estimates of the literacy of labourers during this period will be considered later and will show that for different parts of the country, in

the early 1840's, an average of 30% appeared to be the norm.

We have dealt at some length with the educational condition of the labourers partly because it seemed essential to attempt to establish the literacy, at various points in the 19th century, of this large occupational group. In 1800 it was reported that 49,420 persons from a total population of 250,809 in Gloucestershire, or nearly 20%, were employed chiefly in agriculture[12].

However, the significance of these figures is only clear when considered in relationship to other occupational groups. Data from prison records are somewhat limited: however, we have analysed the stated educational accomplishments of all of those in occupations other than 'labourer' for 1815, 1825 and 1835 and these tables follow:

1815-16 Prisoners remanded in custody. Schedule of education by occupational groups

	Not read or write		Read not write		Read and write		Read a little	
		%		%		%		%
Attorney at law					1	100		
Baker					1	100		
Blacksmith					1	100		
Butcher					1	100		
Collier	2	50			1	25	1	25
Cabinetmaker		100						
Carpenter	1	20			3	60	1	20
Chairmaker					1	100		
Clockmaker					1	100		
Clothworker	1	50			1	50		
Dealer					1	100		
Dyer	1	50			1	50		
Gardener					1	100		
Farmer	1	12.5			6	75	1	12.5
Fish carrier		100						
Machine-maker					1	100		
Millwright					2	100		
Nailer	1	100						
Plasterer					2	100		
Rug worker					1	50	1	50

	Not read or write		Read not write		Read and write		Read a little	
		%		%		%		%
Sackmaker					1	100		
Servant			1	50	1	50		
Sailor	3	75					1	25
Shearman	1	100						
Shoemaker	2	33.3			3	50	1	16.6
Staymaker					1	100		
Stocking-weaver					1	100		
Stonemason	2	33.3			3	50	1	16.6
Sweep, chimney	1	100						
Tinman	1	100						
Waterman	3	60			2	40		
Whitesmith							1	100
Wireworker	1	100						
Writer					1	100		
Total 72	24	33.3	1	1.4	39	54.2	8	11.1

1825: prisoners remanded in custody. Schedule of education by occupational groups

	Not read or write		Read not write		Read and write		Read a little	
		%		%		%		%
Baker					2	100		
Blacksmith			2	50	2	50		
Boatman	2	33.3			2	33.3	2	33.3
Bricklayer							1	100
Butcher	1	25			2	50	1	25
Cabinet-maker		100						
Carpenter	1	16.6	1	16.6	4	66.6		
Clothworker	1	10	3	30	6	60		
Coachsmith							1	100
Collier	3	42.9			2	28.6	2	28.6
Coltbreaker							1	100
Dealer					1	50	1	50
Edge tool maker					1	100		
Fell monger	1	50			1	50		
Gardener					1	100		
Glazier					1	100		
Handle setter	1	50			1	50		
Hurdle maker	2	100						
Gypsy	3	100						
Hawker	2	66.6			1	33.3		

continued

	Not read or write	%	Read not write	%	Read and write	%	Read a little	%
Japanner							1	100
Lace-spinner	1	100						
Millwright					1	100		
Miller	1	100						
Mop maker			1	100				
Plumber					1	100		
Painter	1	100						
Potter	1	100						
Seamstress					1	100		
Sailor					1	100		
Sawyer	2	100						
Servant			1	16.6	5	83.3		
Shearman					1	33.3	2	66.6
Shoemaker	2	18.2	1	9.1	8	72.7		
Shopkeeper	1	100						
Spinner	3	42.9			2	28.6	2	28.6
Stonemason	2	25	1	12.5	5	62.5		
Spring maker			1	100				
Tailor					5	100		
Tiler & plasterer					1	50	1	50
Waterman	1	100						
Weaver	1	12.5	3	37.5	3	37.5	1	12.5
Tinner & brazier	2	100						

1835 Gloucester: Prisoners remanded in Custody. Schedule of education by occupational groups

	Not read or write	%	Read not write	%	Read and write	%	Read a little	%
Barber			1	100				
Baker					4	100		
Basketmaker			1	100				
Blacksmith			2	40	3	60		
Boatman	1	100						
Bricklayer					3	100		
Butcher					6	100		
Cabinet-maker					1	100		
Calf-dealer					1	100		
Carpenter	1	33.3			2	66.6		
Carter					1	100		
China painter							1	100
Clothworker			1	20	4	80		
Coachsmith			1	100				
Collier	1	100						
Coltbreaker					1	100		
Confectioner	1	100						
Cooper					1	100		
Copperplate printer	1	50			1	50		
Dressmaker			1	100				
Errand boy					1	100		
Fueler	1	100						

continued

	Not read or write	%	Read not write	%	Read and write	%	Read a little	%
Gardener					3	100		
Gentleman					1	100		
Gluemaker					1	100		
Grocer					1	100		
Groom					2	100		
Hawker			1	100				
Lodging-house keeper			1	100				
Millwright					1	100		
Pig dealer					1	100		
Plumber					1	100		
Porter					1	100		
Postboy					2	100		
Potter			2	100				
Private in marines					1	100		
Razor-grinder					1	100		
Sailor					4	100		
Sawyer	1	25	1	25	2	50		
Servant					4	100		
Ship carpenter			1	100				
Shoemaker	1	9.1			10	90.9		
Shopkeeper					1	100		

continued

continued

	Not read or write	%	Read not write	%	Read and write	%	Read a little	%
Silverplater			1	100				
Stonemason	2	40	1	20	2	40		
Sweep			3	100				
Tailor	1	14.3	2	28.6	4	57		
Tiler & plasterer					2	100		
Waterman	1	25	2	50	1	25		
Weaver			1	11.1	8	88.9		
Whitesmith					1	100		
Woolcomber					1	100		

From these we are able to infer some general tendencies: bakers, bricklayers, butchers, gardeners, grooms, postboys, sailors, servants, and plasterers (all represented by more than one example) are all able to read and write. Similarly a large proportion of clothworkers, shoemakers and weavers show this ability. A greater diversity of achievement is shown by blacksmiths, sawyers, stonemasons, tailors and watermen, some of which are heavy manual trades where strength and dexterity rather than literacy would be of prime importance. Boatmen, colliers and fuelers, though the samples are small, confirm the trends of low literacy rates which can be more substantially demonstrated from marriage records.

Analysed in more specific detail we see that in 1815/1816 of 165 prisoners remanded in custody whose trade or occupation was stated (there were a number for whom no occupation was given) 72 had named occupations and 93 were labourers.

The figures for named occupational groups, as can be seen, are substantially better than those for labourers and the percentage of those who can read and write is more than three times greater than that of labourers in the same category. Nevertheless, there is a substantial percentage of 33.3 of those unable to read and write, and we can see from the analysis that these are principally accounted for by colliers, fish-carriers, sailors, shearmen, and watermen, though there are other trades represented somewhat atypically in this category: e.g. cabinet-maker, carpenter, farmer and shoemaker. It is interesting to note that only one member of this group is described as able to read not write, and it appears that this category was little used by prison officers at this time.

Analysis of the register for 1825 shows that there are some clear trends. Members of the retail trades have fairly high literacy rates, and the comparatively highly skilled trades, for example carpenters, clothworkers, shoemakers and tailors (all of which are numerically well represented in the

custodial registrations for this year) have a similarly high percentage of those described as able to read and write. Another well represented category, that of servants, shows a 83.3% literacy rate and it is noticeable, when adequate samples are available, that servants appear to have literacy quotients considerably above average in the period in question. Again, we see a marked deficiency among certain occupational groups: boatmen, colliers and sawyers all having low or very low literacy rates.

The figures for 1835 show a considerable shift towards higher literacy rates for specific occupational groups, no fewer than 28 out of the 52 occupations enumerated having 100% literacy. Looked at in greater detail, we see that bakers, butchers, sailors, servants, shoemakers and weavers, all having four or more representatives, produce high percentages of literacy. The literacy of these occupations shows some considerable fluctuations over the period, but as the next stage of our search we collated all the information from these prison records and that from all male occupational data available in 1845, 1855, 1865 marriage records and grouped them into cognate trades or professions. The resulting table is reproduced below.

ANALYSIS OF LITERACY BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS - GLOUCESTERSHIRE

	1815	1825	1835	1839	1845	1855	1865
Professional, yeomen, gentlemen	100	-	-	97.9	99.1	97.9	100
Farmers	75	-	-	95.1	91.1	90.9	93.8
Woodworkers	62.5	36.4	60	92	88.6	94	90
Watermen,boatmen	22.2	37.5	55.6	35.2	39.1	60	78.1
Trades, services	63.6	40.7	67.8	82.4	87.1	89.8	89.6
Stoneworkers	50	62.5	40	75.8	73.6	81.8	81.5
Shoemakers	50	72.7	90.9	85.3	86.3	88.9	88.9
Miners	25	28.6	0	21.9	22.9	59.5	37.5
Clothworkers, weavers	62.5	48.7	73.9	51.9	82.7	83	86.7
Servants (indoor and outdoor)	66.7	100	100	85.3	76.7	88.9	82.7
Clerical	100	-	-	100	100	100	100
Dealers	100	50	100	87.5	93.9	97.6	97.3
Manufacturing	-	50	50	79.5	75	86.2	90.9
Engineers, metalworkers	20	37.5	62.5	74.2	82.9	87	87.5
Labourers	15.6	20.2	35.2	26.8	33.6	41.7	56.3

As can be seen, a greater sense of pattern emerges. This is not necessarily one of consistent incremental increase, and the figures for 1825 are depressed, as the later analysis by broad occupational groups shows clearly. It is interesting to examine individual categories and, where possible, relate these data to collateral evidence.

As can be seen, our sample from prison records for professional and farming groups is small and is confined to 1815. No representatives of these two groups were taken into custody during 1825 and 1835. However, the figures for 1815 show the high levels which we come to expect in these groups from figures from parish sources later in the period. By looking at the relevant section of the table we see the percentage for group 1 is close to 100% throughout the period.

The figure for farmers changes little between 1845 and 1865, but it is a high one. It is interesting to note that an occupational group which was frequently antipathetic towards education for the generality of the populace showed a quantifiable concern for the education of its own. As we see from analysis of literacy in relationship to parental occupation, there are few offspring of farmers who are illiterate, though males show marginally worse rates than females.

The category of woodworkers includes a wide spectrum of individual trades with highly skilled carpentry at the top end of the range, to heavy manual occupations like that of sawyer at the other. We see that prison figures produce an approximate average of 53% for the period, but this is distorted, as most of the figures are, by the 1825 returns. In fact, as the specific analyses show, carpenters produce a remarkably consistent rate, namely 60%; 66.6% and 66.6 for the three periodic points. Marriage registers give similarly consistent rates for 1845-1865 with a peak of 95.7% in 1855 and an apparent decline in 1865. This can be accounted for by the marginal elements in this group already referred to, namely heavy manual workers.

The group designated 'trades and services' contains an even greater range of activities and educational standards so it includes occupations necessarily literate like the police, those desirably literate, like non-commissioned

officers in the army, those which consistently produce high percentages of literacy like butchers and bakers, but also groups like carriers and hawkers whose literacy rates are generally low. It is worth noting that sergeants in Gloucestershire regiments were usually literate, though one aged 45 marrying in 1855 was unable to sign his name. Perhaps he had obtained his promotion before standards had risen. Private soldiers, however, throughout the period studied were usually unable to sign their marriage certificates and this corroborates what we know of military promotion requirements. For example the 19th Foot (Green Howards) before the Crimean War required private soldiers seeking promotion to lance-corporal to read, write from dictation and work the first four rules. Before a man was made a sergeant, he was required "to write faithfully from dictation ... to have a fair knowledge of grammar and to show a general intelligence of history and geography." (White, A.C.T., The Story of Army Education 1643-1963 (1963), p.23.)

With the exception of 1825, this 'trades and services' group shows literacy rates in the mid 60's for the first part of the century; rates in the upper 80's for the second. An interesting feature, which is shared by other occupational groups, is that between 1845 and 1865 there is very little change in the percentage, although in the county as a rule there is a progressive improvement, though less marked, it is true, in males than females. Clearly, a comparatively high rate of literacy is less susceptible to improvement than a low one; looked at another way, the marginal elements of the group may be less susceptible for one reason or another to the advance of educational standards.

Some workers are fairly substantially represented in both prison and parish records. The figures in the former fluctuate, but there is indication of a fairly high degree of literacy from 1855 onwards. Again, it is noticeable that the percentages for 1855 and 1865 remain virtually the same. This is true, also, of shoemakers, who have traditionally been regarded as among the most literate of artisan groups. Up to a point, our figures support this belief and it is

particularly interesting to see that of 11 shoemakers taken into custody in 1835 10 or 90.9% are described as able to read and write. This is an even higher figure than that obtained from parish records in 1845. Unlike some occupational groups, shoemakers have a greater homogeneity at least in Gloucestershire (as opposed to Bristol), because they appear still to be craftsmen rather than factory operatives, and there is not the range of discrete activities that we find in some occupational areas. Conversely in an industrial parish of Bristol we find that the literacy of shoemakers actually declines in 1860 and 1870 before joining the general increase in literacy of all occupational groups from that date on[13]. A possible explanation may be that in SS. Philip and Jacob shoemakers were increasingly absorbed into industrial systems and had neither the educational nor social standing associated with their trade.

The activities grouped under clothworkers are various, including weavers and tailors, who usually exhibit a relatively high literacy rate; stocking weavers whose performance was generally lower, to ancillary textile workers such as dyers, whose literacy rates were frequently low. As a total group they show comparatively good literacy percentages for 1815 and 1825, then in common with many other occupational groups they produce percentages in the 83-86% range for 1845-1865.

Handloom weavers are of interest in this study, firstly because there is a considerable body of knowledge relating to the Gloucestershire workforce in the 18th and 19th centuries, secondly since they formed the subject of a Parliamentary Commission in 1839 and the educational standards of 195 were recorded. The results were as follows:

Able to read and write	108 = 55.5%
Able to read not write	72 = 36.9%
Not read or write	15 = 7.7%

(14)

This group does not show clear patterns of literacy, as some of the following data show. In 1835 the 12 prisoners remanded in custody at Gloucester gaol showed an ability to read and write of 83.3%: a considerably higher figure than that recorded in 1825, which was 37.5. From parish records those weavers able to sign in 1839 were 31.3% and in 1845 75%. The combined percentage for 1839 and 1845 is 45.8%. Total numbers are relatively small and this accounts for some fluctuation, but there appears to be some agreement between the figures estimated by the Parliamentary Commission and the combined figures for 1839 and 1845, which would, it is to be presumed, span part of the age group investigated. They are lower than one would expect from an occupational group which was traditionally associated with higher educational levels than many. It is interesting to note, also, that this group shows worse literacy figures at this period than clothworkers in general. It is possible to consider their own complaint that low profit margins and conditions of work made it difficult to educate their children. Of 39 offspring of weavers who married in Gloucestershire in 1855 only 52.6% of males and 55.0% of females were able to sign, which compares unfavourably with 83% for male clothworkers in general. Of 25 who married in 1865 83.3% of males but only 46.2% of females were able to sign: a lower rate for the latter than the daughters of parents in group 3. There has been a clear series of changes by this time: the category weaver has become relatively rare; male offspring of weavers show a good percentage of literacy and are taking advantage of some of the new posts which are emerging: very few are registering as weavers. This process had been started much earlier in the century in other parts of the South West. The printing firm of Tanner and Butler, Frome, founded 1827, was able to recruit workers of superior dexterity and educational achievements from handloom weavers who had become redundant as a result of powered looms[15]. Conversely female offspring of weavers now show literacy percentages substantially worse than

daughters of labourers. It would be interesting to know how this affected social interaction in their respective areas.

Gloucestershire weavers appear to have had a closer and more efficient organisation than the weavers of other South Western counties[16] and a private letter from a Gloucestershire magistrate in 1826 indicates that the close combination among weavers caused some alarm to the authorities[17]. Similarly the numerous association of wool-combers (described as "the aristocracy of the working classes")

> "being for the most part Dissenters are the just objects of attention to government, and to those who support the constitution of Great Britain against Republican machinations." 18

Perhaps as interesting to us as any radical threat which these groups may have presented is the indication, implicit and explicit in these letters, of their power not only to combine but also to communicate with other combinations in all parts of the country: the real threat posed by the written word.

Lists of weavers subscribed to Scottish books of the early 19th century suggest that weavers as a class formed an educational pinnacle in a hierarchy of literacy[19]. Probably in choosing a weaver, well read if somewhat withdrawn, as the hero of Silas Marner, George Eliot was drawing on established knowledge concerning the educational status of this occupational group.

However, as has been shown in the preceding section, threats to the self-employed weaver of powered machinery had the effect of reducing his status vis-a-vis some other clothworkers and lowering his ability to educate his children, particularly daughters, to a measurable standard.

As noted earlier, servants, including outdoor servants, show a high degree of literacy both from prison and parish records. Particularly noticeable is that of nine servants remanded in custody in 1835 all are described as able to read and write. The larger numbers taken from marriage register evidence from 1845 onwards do not show a correspondingly high level of literacy, but it is

nevertheless high. Various commentators have noted contemporary statements, usually deprecatory, concerning the literary pretensions of apprentices and servants, and Ian Watts suggests that these groups may have been the largest group of readers among the lower orders[20].

Servants, especially in towns, would have had favourable opportunities for borrowing books either on their own account or their employer's, but for our present purposes it is interesting to see that servants of both sexes showed high literacy rates early in this period. The 1865 figures show a slight decrease in the literacy percantage for this group and this is largely attributable to a lower rate for outdoor servants: grooms, gardeners etc. There is clear indication that the educational standards of such servants were lower in 1865 than they had been 10 or even 20 years earlier. A conjectural explanation for this might be that in the buyers' market which operated earlier in the century employers were able to secure servants who had high educational levels relative to the skills required to perform their duties. As the labour market became more competitive those with a relatively superior education could and did seek more remunerative employment.

Clerical workers, by definition, are assumed to be literate and our figures reveal no anomalies. The term 'dealer' is less clearly defined and probably represented a considerable range of entrepreneurial activity. However, as can be seen from the figures extracted from parish records, this group shows a literacy rate of above 90% for the period 1845-1865. It is noticeable, in common with other occupational groups already noted, that there is little change in the position between 1855 and 1865. A similar situation is observable in the occupational group of engineers and metalworkers, who show only 0.5% increase at these two decennial points; prior to that there has been a considerable change in their literacy rate from 20% in 1815 to 87% in 1855.

Among metalworkers in 1845 foundrymen were usually seen to make a mark rather than a signature: blacksmiths, conversely, tended to sign their names. However, those engaged in manufacture (apart from those included in other occupational groups) show a progressive increase in literacy between 1845 and 1865.

The last groups to be considered in this section are watermen and miners, who share, with labourers, the lowest sector in the hierarchy of literacy. Watermen, including boatmen and fishermen, show a progressive increase in the rate of literacy from 22% in 1815 to 78.1% in 1865. As may be seen from the following comparative table watermen are at all periods in advance of labourers in terms of literacy.

Comparative literacy rates for Gloucestershire labourers, watermen and miners 1815-1865

	1815	1825	1835	1839	1845	1855	1865
Labourers	15.6	20.2	35.2	26.8	33.6	41.7	56.3
Miners	25	28.6	0	21.9	22.9	40.5	37.5
Watermen	22.2	37.5	55.6	35.2	39.1	60	78.1

The figure of 55.6% (1835 prison records) appears to be high in comparison to the percentage of those able to sign a marriage register ten years later in 1845. This and other apparent discrepancies between the prison statistics and the more objective parish records will be considered later.

Engels noted an excessively low plane of education in coal districts as described in Parliamentary Reports of the Children's Employment Commission, with the broad conclusion that few could read and still fewer write[21]. This proposition is mainly corroborated by the Gloucestershire data: miners are

seen as having inferior educational standards to labourers when objective statistics from 1839 onwards are considered. As can be seen, by 1865 scarcely more than ⅓ of miners were able to sign their names and the position has deteriorated slightly from that obtaining in 1855. Collateral evidence concerning the Forest of Dean coalfield (which supplies the greater proportion of the Gloucestershire data cited above) is available for 1842. It was found that a very small proportion of boys employed in the collieries were able to write: those who had had the advantage of attending a National School constituted the majority of the exceptions. However, there were indications that many could read, though the investigator was unable to attempt any quantification[22].

An examination of the marriage registers of parishes in the Forest of Dean and neighbouring mining parishes of Newland and Newnham shows that in 1855 of 29 miners 13 or 44.8% were able to sign the marriage register. These males would have been juveniles in 1842 at the time when Mr. Waring reported. It is a higher proportion than one would have expected from his, admittedly subjective, evidence. Our knowledge of attitudes of colliery workers and employers is extended by various statements made in 1861 by Handel Cossham, owner of a coal-mine at Kingswood, as part of the contribution to the educational debate. He disagreed with H.M.I. Mr. Cumin's statement that colliers were in favour of compulsory education; in fact the case was the reverse and they believed that it would retard the progress of education. He did not explain how this could be so[23]. However, Mr. Cossham's views were not necessarily dictated by self-interest, for at another point he suggests that one of the most powerful incentives for education would be a prohibition on the employment of children under 15 unless they had attained a certain standard of education, of which he gives details. He considered that the attraction of the child's wages militated against their education[24]. We know that substantial wages could be earned by boys in the Gloucestershire and Somerset coalfields. However, in the 19th

century there is no indication of female labour being employed in these coal-fields. We should expect, then, that the literacy of daughters of miners would be greater than that of sons, if the only disincentive to miners educating their children had been the necessity to forgo their wages.

However, an analysis of the marriage records of the two parishes of Bitton in the South Gloucestershire coalfield for 1855 and 1865 shows a remarkable difference in the literacy of male and female offspring of miners, as the following table illustrates.

Year	Male Signatures %	Size of sample	Female signatures %	Size of sample
1855	43.5	23	9.5	21
1865	54.2	24	10.5	19

It is probable that other forces are at work here, and it is possible that there was a demand for girl labour, though the figures for miners' daughters are considerably lower than the overall figure for women in general in that parish.

At this point we turn from consideration of specific occupational groups which have shown considerable differences, and usually consistent ones, in levels of literacy, to consider the data presented in a different way. If we consider these as broad-banded occupational groups distinct trends become apparent, as the following table shows. The groupings used are the same as those adopted in section iv of this chapter, namely in group 1 all designated: gentleman, Esq., yeoman, Army or Naval officers, lawyers, clergymen and farmers.

Group 2 All whose occupation does not fall into groups 1 or 3

Group 3 Labourers, watermen and coal-miners only.

As was stated earlier, these do not imply any social categorisation.

LITERACY OF OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS - GLOUCESTERSHIRE (PERCENTAGES)

	PRISON RECORDS			PARISH RECORDS			
	1815	1825	1835	1839	1845	1855	1865
GROUP 1	100	-	-	97.9	99.1	97.9	100
GROUP 2	61.8	48.6	80	90.8	85.6	90.1	89.5
GROUP 3	16.5	21.8	36	27	33	42.2	55.8

(25)

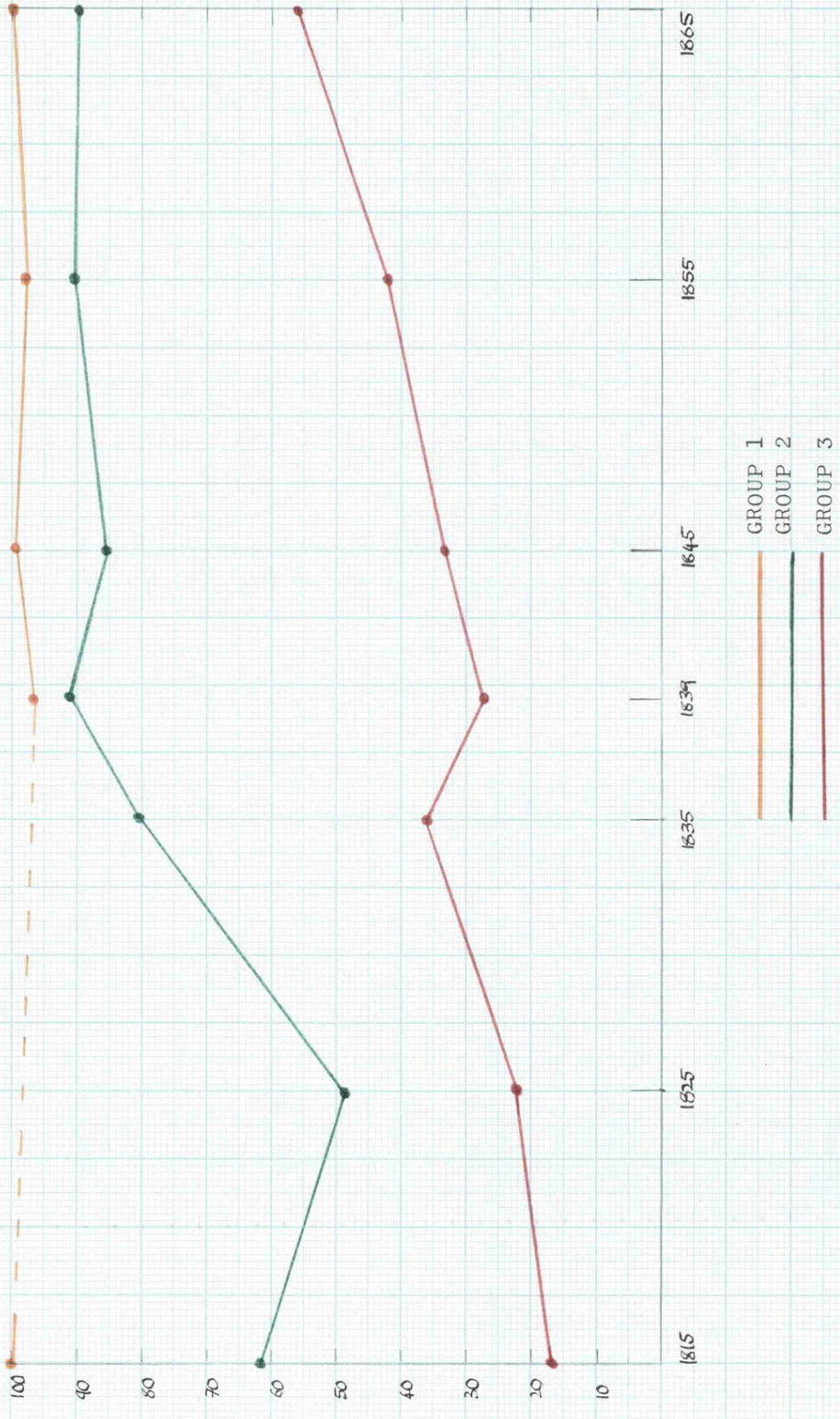
It is clear, for example, that with the exception of 1825, group 2 has reached a relatively high level of literacy early in the century and the final figure of 80% for prison records is not inconsistent with our first figure of 85.6% extracted from parish records. The total figures for this group also confirm a trend, already noted, that many occupations appear to have experienced a period of non-growth of literacy in the decade 1855-1865; the overall percentage shows a reduction of less than 1%, but it is a reduction at a time when literacy among group 3 occupations and women was increasing substantially.

In considering group 3 (labourers, watermen and miners) from this table, we see that theirs is a more or less consistent improvement, though within a narrow incremental band. As we have seen from the analysis of the literacy of occupational groups in Bristol, this particular group made its most rapid movement towards literacy in the years following 1870, and there is no reason

to suppose that the position was different in Gloucestershire as a whole.

One of the clearest inferences which may be drawn from this study of literacy by occupational groups is the consistency of the differences between the broad divisions of professional, artisan and labouring groups and also the implication that specific occupations were more prepared, for whatever reasons, to educate their offspring to the point where they are able to write: an objectively assessable point. However, as suggested earlier, some doubt must remain whether these results reflect the input of primary education or were the concomitants of a continuing educative process within specific trades and occupations.

GRAPH 7 189a Male literacy in Gloucestershire: broad occupational groups.
Sources: 1815-1835 Prison Records; 1839-1865 Marriage Documents.



Chapter 4 (vii)

Educational Provision and Literacy

Much of Chapter 4 has been concerned with the results of educational input, informal or institutionalised, as expressed by measurable educational standards at various points. It is now the intention to examine examples of educational provision in Gloucestershire during this period, mainly to determine not so much the simple 'results', which we have already described, but whether schools were more effective, for whatever reason, in educating the children of the artisan groups rather than the very poor as for the most part agricultural labourers were. For we have seen, in earlier sections, that the children of fathers having occupations other than labourer, watermen and miner show relatively high literacy rates, at least from the middle of the century, and the consistency of the undifferentiated figures before that (and the superiority of artisan literacy shown by our own prison statistics and occupational-specific literacy described by other workers) strongly suggests that this pattern may be extrapolated backwards until at least 1750.

A brief survey of educational provision in Gloucestershire shows that the county was one of the more generously endowed with charity schools, and M.G. Jones shows that 85 charities were established before 1843: twice as many as adjacent Wiltshire and four times those of Worcestershire to the north[26]. The main towns and parishes which benefited from these charities were as follows:

Co. of Gloucester
City of Gloucester
Ampney Crucis
Arlingham
Great Badminton
Berkley
Bisley
Bourton-on-the-Hill S.
Bourton-on-the-Water
Buckland
Cam

Cheltenham S.
Chipping Campden S.
Chipping Campden
Churchdown
Cirencester S.
Dirham
Dursley D.
Dymock S.
Eastington S.
Fairford
Henbury
Horsley
Kempsford S.
Marshfield
Minchinhampton
Minchinhampton D.
Minchinhampton
Minsterworth
Mitchel-Dean S.
North Nibley
Painswick S.
Pebworth
Pucklechurch
Randwick S.
Stapleton
Stonehouse S.
Tetbury
Tewkesbury S.
Thornbury
Weston-upon-Avon
Wotton-under-Edge S.

(27)

Parliamentary surveys

The survey of 1818 indicates that of 350 Gloucestershire parishes 113 had no day school; 81 Dame schools only, and 172 had no Sunday school. There were 63 parishes with no schools at all; most of these had small populations,

i.e. under 200, but a few were sizable and they included Newent (2,538), Uley (1,912), Bishop's Cleeve (1,416) and Awre (1,035)[28].

When the results of the second major educational survey were presented in 1833 the situation had changed considerably in general and for these parishes in particular. Awre had day and Sunday schools founded 1826-1830, which provided places for 167 children or 14.8 of the total population. If we bear in mind an average figure of 10-15 years between leaving school and getting married, we can see what effects, if any, such provision had on literacy. See table on next page.

Percentages of Brides and Bridegrooms signing with marks. Population in 1833

	Schools Begun	% of Pop.	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
AWRE	1826-30	14.8			27.7	57.1	28.5	55.6	16.6	31.2
BISHOP'S CLEEVE	1818-31	14.1			25	65	50	44.4	20	
NEWENT	1827-29	6.8				59	55.5	59.4	60.7	
ULEY	1828	3.0		63.7				25	0	0

(29)

There is a danger in expecting simple relationships between school provision and the rise of literacy, and an apparently low number of children at school in 1833 at Uley does not result in the high level of illiteracy which one might expect. At Newent, however, a comparatively small percentage of children being educated in 1833 and no official provision before 1827 do have an apparent effect in producing poor literacy rates for 1825-1855. For 1845 and 1855 it is possible to analyse these figures in greater detail. Of those marrying in 1845 ten were labourers; of these nine or 90% were unable to sign their names. All of those nine also married wives who were unable to sign their names. The six non-labourers who married (confectioner, woolstapler, farmer, registrar, gardener and solicitor) were all able to sign and they all married wives who could do so also.

The situation in 1855 is changed slightly, though the overall literacy rate is worse. Of the nine labourers marrying, six did not sign their names (i.e. 66.7%); of the non-labourers (blacksmith, Army Captain, farmer, sweep and boatman) three were unable to sign their names. All but two of the labourers married women unable to sign; the wives of the blacksmith and boatman were able to sign their names. "Double illiterates" appear more frequently in labouring groups than artisan groups and at the end of this chapter we attempt to quantify the numbers of couples both of whom were unable to sign the marriage register and classify these according to occupational groups.

Our inference from this analysis of the Newent figures is that in an educationally underprovided area, those mainly deprived were the labouring population. An analysis of Awre,which seems to have a better proportion undergoing education, leads to a similar conclusion. The data are as follows:

AWRE: transcription of marriage registers

1845	1855	1865
(FATHER) Blacksmith Mason F Innkeeper	Farmer Farmer F Farmer	Waterman lab^{r} F waterman
Sawyer X lab^{r} F Shoemkr	Ironmaster clergyman F Esquire	Ostler X postman F X lab^{r}
lab^{r} schoolmstr. F X lab^{r}	Builder Innkeeper F X plumber	Collier X collier F X haulier
Waterman X wtm. F X shoemkr		lab^{r} X lab^{r} F lab^{r}
lab^{r} X lab F X Garden^{r}		Esquire Esquire F Captain RN
Coachman Farmer F Garden^{r}		Post Office postmaster Clerk F Farmer
Lab^{r} X lab^{r} F X lab^{r}		Carpenter blacksmith F Farmer
Labr X lab^{r} F tailor		Carpenter carpenter F collier
Waterman X water- man F waterman		
Overall percentages of marks:		
55.6	16.6	31.2

The apparently high rate of marks in 1845 is accounted for mainly by the high proportion of labourers and watermen marrying in this year: all of them sign with a mark, with the exception of the labourer whose father was a schoolmaster. In 1855 there were few marriages and they included no labourers, watermen or colliers: the number of signatures by mark was correspondingly low. In 1865 the one labourer signed with a mark and he is joined in this by an ostler and a collier.

Generally speaking one can be fairly sure that where overall percentages of marks appear to be unusually high, examination of the data will indicate a large proportion of workers designated labourer, waterman or collier. For example the figure of 87.5 for St. Briavels in 1855 seems extremely high. In fact, there were only four marriages in that year: three labourers and one collier, all of whom signed by mark, as did all but one wife.

As a county, despite a substantial increase in population, the number of parishes with no educational provision of any kind had fallen considerably by 1833, and included only small rural parishes. There had been a fall from 113 to 57 of parishes in which there was no day school, and of these 41 had a population less than 300. Parishes with no school at all had fallen from 63 to 34. The largest of these were Hewelsfield (535), Charfield (487), Corse (476) and Elmstone Hardwicke (373)[30].

Again, it is interesting to look at percentages of illiteracy in the light of this lack of educational provision.

	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
CHARFIELD						25	37.5	25	50	40	
CORSE						33.3	16.6	50	75	75	75
ELMSTONE HARDWICKE	85.7	50	80	83.3	50	20	100		100	100	47.7
HEWELSFIELD						50	100	50	56.3		

Elmstone Hardwicke remained without a school until 1864, and although for much of the 19th century marriage records show total illiteracy there are indications, earlier in the century, that informal networks of some kind were at work. At Hewelsfield a new minister in 1849 found "morals at a low ebb and ignorance astounding."[31]

A detailed analysis of the marriage returns for Hewelsfield in 1845 shows the following:

Of 24 couples who married 13 (54.2%) of the men were illiterate and 14 (58.3%) of the women.

Of the men, 11 were labourers; of these only one was able to sign his name (i.e. an illiteracy rate of 91%). Of those not described as labourers there were a carpenter, currier, woodcutter, two sailors, hostler, printer, baker, woodman, blacksmith, nailer and shoemaker. Of these three signed with marks (one sailor, woodman, hostler) i.e. an illiteracy rate of 25% among named trades or crafts[32].

Of the ten women who were able to sign their names, six were daughters of fathers with named trades. Of the 9 literate non-labourers 8 were sons of non-labourers. The one literate labourer was the son of a farmer.

As an example of a parish with no schools this has some interesting implications. There is a very clear line of demarcation between labourers and non-labourers with regard to literacy. A relatively high percentage of non-labourers had basic literacy and in both male and female literacy there are indications that, in such a parish, informal networks, based on family skills, maintained a reasonable level of literacy; conversely, the condition of the labourer was particularly depressed. In 1845 the general level of illiteracy in Gloucestershire for labourers was 66.4 [33].

However, when we look at Naunton, a parish of similar size, which appears to be well provided with school places, we find that the illiteracy figures for 1845 are slightly higher, i.e. 58.3 as opposed to 56.3. The Educational

Return of 1833 shows that there were two daily schools together providing places for 20 males and 15 females at the expense of their parents. Also two Sunday schools (Anglican and Baptist) providing places for 55 males and 55 females. No date of establishment is given.

A detailed analysis of marriage returns for Naunton in 1845 shows that 6 couples were married: 4 of the men and 3 of the women were illiterate. 5 of the men were described as labourers and of these 3 were unable to sign: an illiteracy rate of 60%, which is slightly below the average for Gloucestershire as a whole.

A tentative inference which we can draw from the foregoing is that inadequate school provision had little effect on the literacy rates of those in artisan occupations; the deficiency was remedied by other means. Good provision did not necessarily have a beneficial effect on the literacy rates of labourers, watermen and colliers, though it usually resulted in better figures than in areas where there was no formal provision. For various reasons, and financial disability was a strong one, labourers did not or could not educate their children, and this was true to a greater extent of colliery workers and to a slightly less degree of watermen and the relatively unskilled artisans, ostlers, hauliers and similar occupations. It is reasonable to suppose that a child who had received little or no primary education, who subsequently proceeded to an occupation which demanded no progressive standards of literacy and who was not able to receive any educational assistance or stimulus from family or peer group would be unlikely to reach any measurable standard of literacy.

Chapter 4 (viii)

(a) Comparisons with parallel regional studies

It is helpful to see how the figures and patterns established for Bristol and Gloucestershire compare with other regional and national studies.

The first of these, from a study of the Lancashire evidence (1754-1845) by Michael Sanderson[34], includes a graph which compares the national trend (as calculated by R.S.Schofield) with that for male and female literacy for the county. Superimposed upon these are the figures for Gloucestershire male and female literacy percentages.

Some clear inferences can be drawn from these graphs. The Gloucestershire trends (though the overall figures are worse) follow more closely national trends than the Lancashire figures: with the exception of 1835 when there is a considerable downward movement. Male literacy does not show the trend which is shown by Industrial Lancashire, which is mainly downward until 1835. Gloucestershire female literacy is considerably better than Lancashire and our figures for 1845-1865 show that it was better (substantially so for 1855 and 1865) than the national average.

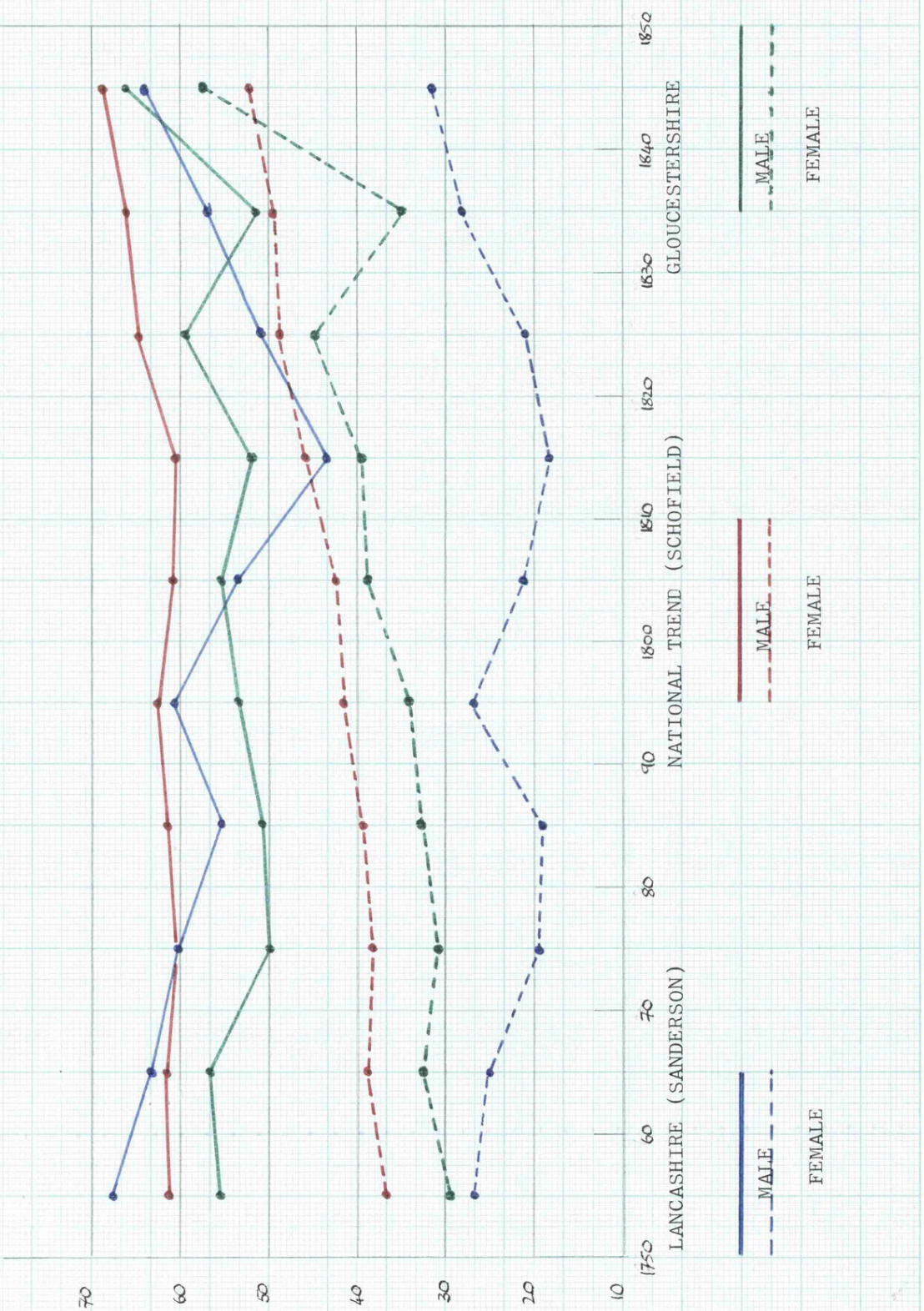
An interesting general point noticeable from this graph is that whatever the gap between male and female literacy the general upward and downward movement is parallel, which is another indicator of the consistency with which educational forces (informal and formal) operated in relationship to males and females, at least during this period.

Work on the differences between the literacy of occupational groups is not always directly comparable with our findings, as the groupings do not necessarily coincide. For example, having found at a fairly early stage that the literacy of labourers and servants tends to differ considerably, we did not include them in the same category. However, it is possible to do this in order to examine some of the figures produced by Stone, Sanderson and Schofield.

Although, as we have seen, Sanderson's figures for male literacy in Indsutrial Lancashire vary more than their Gloucestershire equivalents, his occupational-literacy table for the 1830's is at a time when the overall figures are within 6% of each other.

As can be seen from the following comparative table there are some broad similarities.

GRAPH 8 201a National, Industrial Lancashire and Gloucestershire Literacy Rates 1754-1845



Percentage able to sign their names

	Lancs. 1830's	Glos. 1845	Bristol (St. Philips) 1838-40
Book-keeper, clerk, accountant	100	100	100
Schoolmaster	100	100	100
Watch, clock, precision instrument or part-maker	89.3		
Joiner, carpenter, wright	82	88.6	78
Shoemaker	79.9	86.3	60
Farmer	78.4	91.1	72
Tailor	72.7		
Marine, sailor, seaman	68.3		88
Mechanic	67.9		
Bricklayer	67.6		
Blacksmith	67.10	82.9	56
Glass-maker, blower, grinder etc.	65.52		50
Foundryman, forge worker, ironmoulder etc.	55.3		66.6
Husbandman	54.1		
Mason	54.1	73.6	60.6
Hatter	47.1		88.9
Carters, waggoners, carriers	40.9		
Weavers, clothworkers	36.8	82.7	66.7
Miner	13.9	22.9	0
Labourer	33.6	33.6	29.5
Boatman, waterman	29.30	39.1	

Joiners, carpenters, shoemakers and farmers appear high in literacy rating (Gloucestershire figures are somewhat later and, perhaps consequently, better.) The figures for the Bristol parish of St. Philips, though based on substantially smaller samples than Sanderson's, show very similar rates for many occupations. Occupational areas where there are substantial differences are hatters and weavers. Part of this difference may be accounted for by the fact that the Sanderson figures include female and male workers whereas ours are confined to males.

A most striking parallel is the literacy percentage for labourers in Lancashire and Gloucestershire, both of which are based on substantial samples. From this and other surveys from this period a figure in the low 30's for percentages of labourers able to write leads us to suggest that the educational state of the majority of labourers, a substantial proportion of the work force of the country, was very low indeed. From these figures we see that miners and watermen in both counties were in a similarly depressed educational condition.

What emerges from this comparison is the existence, in two very different areas, of a hierarchy of educational achievement and this is further strengthened by the following table produced by R.Schofield based on marriage records which (unusually) gave occupational details before 1840.

ILLITERACY BY OCCUPATIONAL GROUP, 1754-1784

	1754-1784		1785-1814		1815-1844	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Gentry and Professional	68	0	170	1	204	3
Officials, etc.	20	0	43	5	94	2
Retail	19	5	94	10	150	5
Wood	137	16	361	17	448	11
Estate	29	17	66	18	87	30
Yeomen and Farmers	97	19	262	18	315	17
Food and Drink	57	19	189	18	277	18
Textile	41	20	83	39	38	16
Metal	60	22	170	29	301	19
Leather	78	23	232	30	320	22
Miscellaneous	81	30	129	32	130	25
Transport	154	31	462	38	549	30
Clothing	63	35	112	21	135	14
Armed forces (non-officer)	180	41	773	51	122	32
Husbandmen	666	46	560	56	123	52
Construction and Mining	146	51	352	47	499	38
Laborers and Servants	192	59	596	65	1,632	66
Unknown	37	24	130	25	19	26
ALL	2,126	36	4,784	39	5,443	35

(35)

As can be seen Schofield has taken these in periods of approximately thirty years and he considers that little emphasis should be placed on the figures since they come from a small number of parishes. However, there is a clear consistency between the figures themselves and the 1815-1844 figures which closely parallel those from Gloucestershire and Bristol from the early 40's. Our figures show high literacy rates for members of professional classes and officials, and in those four areas where direct comparison is possible, the following results:

1844/5

Occupation	%age of marks Schofield	Gloucestershire
Woodworkers	11	11.4
Textile workers	16	17.3
Leather workers	22	13.7
Labourers and servants	66	59.9

There is substantial agreement on levels of literacy of woodworkers and textile workers; less agreement on leather workers. Our sample mainly consists of shoemakers, which may explain the discrepancy. In order to make our categories comparable we have added servants to labourers and although they are a small proportion of the whole, they bring down the percentage of marks from 66.4 to 59.9. It is not known how large a proportion of servants there were in Schofield's sample but, as can be seen, with or without this variable these national figures are in broad agreement with the Gloucestershire and Lancashire ones already considered.

The only figures which show substantial differences from ours are those in the category 'construction and mining'. Again, it is not clear what is included under construction, but whatever it is would seem to have given miners a boosted literacy rate which our own and other figures do not show for the period.

Our final consideration of parallel work is of Professor Stone's graph extracted from signatures of bridegrooms marrying by licence in the Oxford Archdeaconry and Gloucester Diocese c. 1635-1822[36].

This again shows the substantial differences in literacy between labourers and artisans/tradesmen. As indicated earlier, we have found much higher rates for servants and would not normally combine these two. The same kind of polarisation continues throughout the 19th century as the graph opposite (a summary of information relating to broad occupational groups from Chapter 4 (v)) shows.

However, as we have attempted to demonstrate in detail, the spectrum of occupational literacy is more finely differentiated and shows quite clear distinctions of ability between certain artisan groups which appear to be maintained consistently in different parts of the country. The homogeneity of literacy between occupational groups is a particularly interesting sector of study and suggests various kinds of unity of cultural and educational aims shared by discrete strata of society of the 18th and 19th centuries which one can predicate but imperfectly explain.

One of our main strategies, as described in Chapter 4 (iv), attempted to show the consistency with which certain groups educated their children to a measurable standard of literacy, often despite lack of formal educational provision. Although limited in scope it may be sufficiently convincing to produce similar analyses in other county areas.

Clear trends suggesting advantage begin to emerge, and it appeared that even where male artisans were unable to sign their names a substantial proportion married wives who were able to do so. In order to examine this proposition more closely, an analysis was made of the numbers of couples both making a mark (double marks) in years 1839, 1845, 1855 and 1865. The following is a tabular representation of the findings as percentages of the total number of marriages solemnised.

	MINERS	WATERMEN	LABOURERS	ALL OTHERS
1839	2.0	1.5	18.9	7.5
1845	1.4	1.1	17.4	5.4
1855	2.1	0.2	13.2	2.4
1865	1.0	0.2	6.4	2.4

The relatively high proportion of 29.9% for 1839 is concentrated among occupational group 3, that is miners, watermen and labourers. Considered as a proportion of their group rather than the total, we find that 59.7% illiterate labourers married similarly illiterate wives.

By 1845 there has been a substantial reduction in the number of double illiterates, but the proportions of group 3 remain at a high level, namely 19.9%. The total number of double illiterates among labourers has fallen slightly to 52%. At this point it is possible to make comparison with national levels: the Registrar General's figures for 1847 show 24% of double marks.

Double marks for 1855 have again been reduced, substantially so in the case of those in groups 1 and 2. The national figure for double marks in 1855 was 21.1%, so the Gloucestershire total of 17.8% was rather better. However, we see that 36.2% of labourers marrying were still in this condition. The implications for a family having parents with imperfect or non-existent skills of literacy are not entirely clear since context is an important factor. However, it is interesting to note that as early as 1845 in Cheltenham there were only 6 couples producing double marks from 231 marriages.

By 1855 in Gloucestershire as a whole only 2.4% of total marriages showed double marks for groups 1 and 2, in actual numbers 39 couples. It is reasonable

to suppose that by this time in Gloucestershire as a whole and in large towns in particular double illiterates among these groups, at least under 40, would have been a comparative rarity.

By 1865 there has been another substantial reduction in the total number producing double marks, that is, 9.9%, though 23.2% of labourers marrying fall within this category. In the nation as a whole double marks have fallen to 14.1%.

It should be emphasised that families in which at least one senior member could write would have had a real advantage over those which contained no such member, particularly where Co-operative Societies invoked their literacy rules or where the family relied on a home-based business for its livelihood.

Chapter 4 (viii) (b)

An important question to which an answer must be attempted is the significance of a signature in terms of the ability to write in general and the ability to read. Here we are on considerably less objective ground and any results are likely to be approximations. In order to narrow the field somewhat, we shall concentrate on the period 1840-1850 and attempt some correlation between signature data and other levels of literacy higher than this basic unit.

It should be remembered that most of our data is drawn from marriage records and these usually imply a gap of about 12-15 years from the time of active schooling. A signature produced then is likely to be not merely the result of a remembered skill but one which has had continued, if infrequent, practice.

From R.K.Webb onwards many commentators have noticed the ratio of readers to writers which constantly appears in 19th century surveys, prison statistics and in other sources as 3:2. This is true of most examples and true of Fripp's Bristol Survey of 1838. However, one must ask the supplementary question, "What kind of writing and what kind of reading ?" We know from our collateral studies of marriage records that in the case of Fripp's figures writing meant at least the ability to write asignature. For how many of the sample it meant more than this, we do not know. Similarly, the ability to read, though claimed by 77.5% of those interviewed, presumably covered a wide range of ability from those who could read their own names and a few signs to members of occupational groups like policemen who would probably have been required not only to read print but also handwriting: appreciably more difficult, as children will still testify.

Roger Schofield follows Joseph Fletcher[37] in believing that a signature implies the ability to read fluently. Fletcher's argument was as follows:

> "The capacity to write indicates a capacity to read, and, in most cases at least, an occasional habit of doing so; which, again, cannot have been acquired and retained without a length of time having been passed under influences comparatively of an improving character." 38

Roger Schofield makes the point that in most 19th century surveys ability to read was taken to imply a very low standard indeed, often no more than spelling through words. If, he reasons, a measure of minimum standard of reading is required, then the measure based on ability to sign will be too low, and will need inflating by almost 50%. However, if a measure of ability to read fluently is required the evidence of the surveys would seem to corroborate the opinion of an educational inspector of the time that since ability to sign was roughly equivalent to being able to read fluently, a measure of the former provides a good indication of the latter[39].

Unfortunately, Fletcher, whose argument Schofield has paraphrased, does not use or imply the word 'fluently', and although Schofield's argument is ingenious, it seems to be informed conjecture rather than a verifiable proposition. Fletcher also seems to be making deductions from limited evidence, and although one would probably agree with a later Registrar General who claimed that the ability to write a signature implied the ability to read it, it is difficult to accept much more ability than that, at least deduced from that proposition.

It is true that in England the teaching of reading preceded, in priority and chronologically, the teaching of writing, and it is unlikely that a person able to retain the ability to write a signature for 12-15 years should not retain the ability to read as well. Unlikely, but by no means impossible.

Firm evidence is difficult to obtain in this sector, but James Hole's analysis (published in 1853) of the educational standards of 1,866 prisoners in Leeds City Gaol gives some valuable pointers[40].

These are as follows:

Can neither read nor write	660	
Can read and write imperfectly	1171)	
" " " " well	33)	64.63
Of superior education	1)	
Not ascertained	1	
	1866	

The degree of instruction, analysed in greater detail, was as follows:

	%	
Reading		
Ignorant of the names of the letters	7.28	
Acquainted with the alphabet	18.29	
Could read a little	18.22)	
Could read fairly well	19.46)	74.41
Could read well	36.73)	
Writing		
Unable to write at all	47.81	
Could write their own names and no more	23.32)	
Capable of writing a letter	26.53)	52.18
Good writers	2.33)	
Arithmetic		
Entirely ignorant	72.08	
Could perform the simple rules	19.82	
" " " compound rules	5.83	
" " " higher rules	2.25	

Although 74.41 are described as being able to read, a more detailed analysis shows that the percentage of those able to read fairly well and read well was 56.2; this is closely comparable to the 52.2 who could write, either their names only or more.

From these figures, then, there appears to be some support for Schofield's contention that the ability to write a signature may be equated with the ability to read fairly effectively. These figures appear to be based on some form of test rather than mere self-assessment. The overall figures for writers and readers are very close to the figures produced by Fripp[41].

If we limit ourselves to this mid-point in the 19th century we can tentatively suggest that the ability to sign was equivalent to a reasonable degree of proficiency in the ability to read. Hole's figures suggest that of those who could write a signature almost a half could do no more than that. A very small proportion were described as good writers.

These inferences are tentative and provisional; it may be that recent research by Professor Egil Johansson will help to establish more clearly the relationship between these two skills, but even so Swedish educational development and its priorities may not be sufficiently similar to our own for more than approximate comparisons to be made. It is clear that different approaches to the problem are necessary and it is unlikely that any clear, absolute equation will be possible. Meanwhile, it may be helpful to accept as an approximate guide the proposition that the ability to sign is equivalent to a fair proficiency in reading: at least the ability to read parts of the Bible and published material of a simple kind.

Chapter 4 Summary

In the early sections of this chapter we were concerned with establishing rates of literacy for males and females in Gloucestershire during the period 1755-1865, and the table in section i represents the fullest information hitherto extracted from marriage records for this county. The main inferences which can be made from this material are that literacy levels in Gloucestershire show clear trends: male literacy between 1755 and 1835 remains within the band of 50-60%; female literacy within a wider band (showing greater movement) of 28-46% over the same period. Thereafter the improvement of literacy levels for both sexes is considerable. At some time in the period 1855-1865 females achieve higher literacy levels than males, and in the years prior to this female literacy in Gloucestershire is substantially better than the national average as indicated by the Registrar General.

The framework which the overall figures give conceals a considerable amount of information which we have attempted to reveal. The first, and possibly the most important, is the relationship of literacy to occupation. Drawing on marriage and prison records, it has been demonstrated that a hierarchy of literacy existed, with the miner at the lowest end of the scale, closely followed by the agricultural labourer, a finely differentiated spectrum of ability as measured by the percentages of literacy in individual occupations above that. The clear indications from our preliminary researches that the factor of occupational literacy was more constant than others led us to test this proposition in terms of our knowledge of the literacy of towns and parishes of different sizes.

We noted that the largest town, Cheltenham, had extremely good literacy rates early in the 19th century. Other towns were worse, but the general indication was that towns larger than 5,000 and those in the medium size range 1,000-5,000 fared better in terms of literacy than towns or parishes below

1,000. This is partly the result of poorer educational facilities, but mainly of the greater concentration of agricultural labourers in small towns and parishes (and colliers in mining areas). As has been demonstrated, where parishes show particularly poor literacy rates for any given year, this may usually be explained in terms of the number of agricultural labourers being married and thus lowering the percentage of signatures. Although we have cited only a few examples it would be possible to demonstrate this extensively for most of the parishes of Gloucestershire.

The hierarchy of literacy which we have posited compares broadly with analyses of occupational literacy by other workers. This leads one to suspect that the relative constancy of occupational literacy could have a predictive value. In predominantly agricultural counties, for example, where the average literacy of labourers is known, it should be possible to make approximate, though informed, estimates of the broad composition of groups, given the raw statistics. In chapter 3 we demonstrated the effect that a large concentration of labourers could have in depressing the percentage of literates in an urban parish.

The analysis of literacy in relationship to parental occupation enabled us to see in greater detail where the dramatic improvement in female literacy was mainly concentrated, that is among daughters of labouring groups in towns and parishes of less than 5,000. We saw, conversely, that daughters of parents in what we have called group 2, mainly artisans, tradesmen and self-employed workers, did not achieve higher literacy rates than male offspring at any time during this period with the exception of area A (towns and parishes of less than 1,000 in 1865).

Though it is possible to catalogue these trends with numerical accuracy, it is more difficult to assign causes. Our tentative explanation is in terms of the patterns of formal and informal education operating at least in the period 1830-1860. One of the findings of section vii is that literacy rates of

artisans remain relatively unaffected by lack of educational provision in small parishes, whereas the most severe effect appears to be on the offspring of labourers. Conversely, where educational provision is good, daughters of labourers, increasingly, seem to benefit rather than sons, and this tends to corroborate the statement of R.L.Sargant noted earlier that in agricultural counties "boys go early into the fields and leave their sisters at school."

The differences which we have noticed concerning the achievements in literacy of offspring of different occupational groups raise the important question whether these were the effects of primary education or the effects of a continuing education in literacy which were built into the structure of some trades and occupations. In considering this we need to bear in mind that marriage statistics measure an ability manifested 12-15 years after initial schooling was complete and could be affected by what happened in that intervening period.

There are some indications that surveys of children's ability and the ability of the same occupational group (though not necessarily the same individuals) some 15 years later suggest that there is an improvement which may be the result of continuing educative processes. In considering the evidence provided by the survey of SS. Philip and Jacob we noted that levels of literacy 12-15 years later were higher than would be expected from the numbers of children stated to be attending schools[42]. Clearly, other factors, including migration, may have influenced this. We noted, also, that surveys of boy miners in the Forest of Dean coalfield would suggest lower literacy rates than marriage figures indicate later. Again, we noted that parishes in Gloucestershire where no provision for formal education was available nevertheless produced satisfactory figures for the offspring of artisans at a later date.

However, there is contradictory evidence as well. The downswings of literacy which we and other workers have charted affect artisan groups as well as labouring groups, and this would suggest that the main factor was the

absence, earlier, of primary school provision or acceptance (for example, during the Napoleonic Wars), since there is no reason why informal networks should be susceptible to economic or industrial movements.

It seems likely that the answer to this question lies in a combination of both influences but that the relative weight of the factors may alter considerably according to the nature of the occupation. Measurements of occupational literacy before 1838 are difficult to obtain and our figures from prison records are offered tentatively. However, these show clearly that groups such as woodworkers, those engaged in trade or services and clothworkers were producing untypically low figures for 1825, a time when it would be reasonable to expect effects of war, especially on increased industrial production, and hence demand for child labour, to be considerable.

However, it is an area which needs more detailed study, probably combining the widest range of data relating to occupational literacy, preferably from non-prison sources, to provide an accurate statistical framework, and micro-studies of the literacy of occupational groups. Our study in this respect has delineated the problem rather than produced a solution.

Our analysis of prison statistics where they are concurrent with marriage registers has showed that labourers in custody had similar literacy rates to their contemporaries. The fuller classification used by prisons enables us to see more precisely what this meant in terms of general literacy skills, particularly when we include James Hole's detailed analysis of Leeds prison data. Certain problems remain, one being that our knowledge relates mainly to male labourers. Prison data tell us little about the educational accomplishments of women and little about the higher skills of artisans. However, an extensive analysis of prison records on a nationwide basis would probably add considerably to the available corpus of knowledge.

The final question considered in this chapter related to the relationship between a signature and other skills of literacy. As we saw, by taking a particular point, 1840, in the 19th century it is possible to show that there is a clear statistical relationship, corroborated by a number of surveys, which suggests that the ability to sign a document is equivalent to a reasonable proficiency in reading. Though there seem to be good grounds for this as a statistical equation, it leaves considerable doubt of individual accomplishments. There are dangers in investing too much significance in this evidence. For example, there is a danger in assuming that the general literacy of, say, individual carpenters was greater than the general literacy of individual literate labourers, merely because as a group they showed higher percentages of literacy. There is a further danger in assuming that the ability to read implies the ability to read all kinds of material: it is a reasonable assumption that in the 18th and 19th centuries, as today, there was a wide spectrum of ability, one which was not necessarily related to the statistical hierarchy of literacy which we have described. Different measures and methodologies are needed to examine this problem, and chapter 5 contains some tentative contributions towards framing a methodology to illuminate it.

Chapter V

Introduction

An important consideration discussed at the 1980 Leicester Conference on Literacy, principally by Roger Schofield and Harvey Graff, is that a simple measurement of the dichotomy between the literate and the illiterate is not sufficient. We need to identify and define a spectrum of ability and attempt to calculate the relative position of any group on that spectrum.

Signature evidence is helpful in establishing a basic index; collateral sources can extend this somewhat further. Other strategies, however, are needed to extend our knowledge of the skills of literacy of the working people of Bristol and Gloucestershire in our chosen period. In the following chapter I have considered secondary and primary material from various sources, much but not all from the West Country and some, more specifically, from towns or parishes which have acted as paradigms in earlier sections.

The fundamental problem which I have attempted to explore is what could and what did working people read and, because that is such an ambiguous phrase, trying to link it more precisely to the occupational groups considered in earlier chapters. It is a quest which is full of interest but also of frustration, for the evidence is circumstantial or anecdotal. Taken singly it may be of little account, but the cumulative effect of coinciding data, somewhat like successive overlay transparencies used on an overhead projector, builds up a more convincing picture.

The following sections consider various viewpoints: those of modern researchers, those of contemporary commentators. It considers sectarian and secular publications and attempts to gauge the strata of society for which they were intended and the attitudes of their distributors and recipients. I have attempted to analyse some of the networks of distribution and what library data tell us of the composition of the reading public. Commentary on a number of seamen's letters c. 1800-1811

is included and these are considered as examples of the growing need for ordinary people to communicate by the written word and their varying skills in doing so. Finally, I attempt to consider the hierarchy of the published word in terms of readability to determine whether this can throw any light on the discrepancy which often appears to have existed between the intentions of the providers and the reactions of putative readership.

CHAPTER V (i)

A consideration of modern commentaries on readership in the 18th and 19th centuries.

Professor R.D.Altick in "The English Common Reader" has collected a considerable volume of data to illustrate the history of the mass reading public between 1800 and 1900[1]. Although he posits a large potential market of readers before 1850, he shows that prices of most books were beyond the purchasing powers of poorer paid artisans and most of the labouring class. The second half of the century showed an enormous expansion, particularly in newspapers and periodicals aimed at a readership assumed to be curious but having little basic knowledge. Altick's impressive documentation concerning the growth in printing runs of books and periodicals is accompanied by a digest of much of the research concerning early 19th century education. He reaches the conclusion from this that though the importance of the 1870 Forster Act can easily be exaggerated, and while it did not significantly hasten the spread of literacy, what it did do was to ensure that the rate at which literacy had increased from 1851 to 1871 would be maintained. Had the State not intervened at this point, it was probable that the progress of literacy would have considerably slowed in the last quarter of the century, simply because illiteracy was by that time concentrated in those classes and regions that were hardest to provide for under the voluntary system. In short, Altick suggests, the Forster Act was responsible for the 'mopping-up' operation by which the very poor children, living in slums or in remote country regions, were taught to read.

Altick considers that few ordinary labourers could read at any time in the 18th century, though he cites no evidence to substantiate this. He suggests that the SPCK publication of a tract entitled "Kind Cautions against Swearing" and distribution among hackney coachmen and seamen are a better indication of the reformers' lack of realism than of the incidence of literacy. He quotes Charles Leslie, writing at much the same period, who asserted that the majority of the people did not and could not read books, though they would

gather around one who could read and listen to an "Observer" or "Review". Altick cites other anecdotal evidence to support the contention that reading aloud was common in the 18th century and suggested low reading standards among the masses.

Exceptions to this were the Methodists, who numbered over 56,000 by 1789. Wesleyans were expected to read as much as their leisure allowed: Wesley himself promulgated the axiom that "reading Christians will be knowing Christians."[2] Details are given of some of the extensive publishing enterprises carried out by Wesleyan Methodists to supply the demand in part dictated by them. These included simplified and abridged versions of some non-religious works. The nature of these and the levels of comprehension which they suppose will be considered later.

Altick quotes J.L.Lowes and others to testify to the widespread popularity of chap-books in the century and suggests that, apart from Bibles, prayer-books and tracts, in many areas outside cities or large towns these would have been the only material available for those who could read or wished to do so.

Altick notes the effect of the 1774 Copyright decision which virtually killed perpetual copyright and opened up 'incalculable' consequences to the reading public. However, as his statistics also show, the price of books continued to rise after 1780, reaching a peak circa 1830. Combined with the newspaper tax of 1776 which raised the tax from 1d to 1½d per sheet and subsequent increases in 1789, 1797 and 1815 which brought the tax to 4d, print in most forms remained expensive and trade objections to the mechanical production of paper delayed the introduction of cheap, uniform-sized paper until 1820.

However, expensive though books and newspapers were, innumerable libraries, coffee houses and taverns where papers could be read flourished during this period. Altick claims that the appearance of hundreds of 'trashy' novels

every year and the establishment of ever more libraries to distribute their 'poison' among the populace greatly strengthened the opposition to the spread of education. From the prevalent climate of social opinion sprang the fatalistic conviction that the lower orders, simply because they were inferior intellectually as well as socially, would never be capable or desirous of reading anything but the hair-raising, scandalous or lachrymous tales upon which they battened. Every new reader would automatically and irreparably become a victim of circulating library fiction. So it was futile, indeed dangerous, to promote the extension of literacy[3].

It is true that moves for wider educational provision made little progress in the second half of the 18th century; however, as most recent quantitative research has shown, a substantial number of artisans were literate and the overall proportion did not fall markedly, despite political and economic disincentives. As we have attempted to show earlier, large proportions of artisans and tradesmen were literate, but, as consideration of contemporary accounts reveals, had little to read apart from Holy Writ and ephemeral publications. Altick also considers in detail the history of Paine's 'Rights of Man', which, originally printed at 3/-, nevertheless sold 50,000 copies in three weeks. Subsequent editions were published at 6d and by 1793 it was alleged that 200,000 copies were in circulation; at the time of his death, the circulation of Part II is said to have been nearly 1,500,000 copies, or, Altick estimates, one for every ten people in the United Kingdom. Figures which he suggests should be accepted with caution.

This is not the place in which to consider "The Rights of Man" in detail, but much mythology appears to have grown up round its membership and reception. A scholarly examination of its progress and impact would be a valuable addition to knowledge. Consideration of its text in terms of readability, which we report later, suggests that it requires a level of reading skill considerably

higher than the tracts and chapbooks which it is alleged to have supplanted.

Whatever its actual impact, its supposed dangers led to a flurry of antidotal activity by the SPCK, Hannah More and other interested or alarmed bodies, which Altick catalogues in detail. He also gives interesting contemporary opinions concerning the readership of periodicals such as those published by Chambers later in the century when the immediate dangers of political revolution had passed. Chambers himself in 1840 considered that his magazine was read by the élite of the labouring community.

> "A fatal mistake is committed in the belief that the lower classes read ... Some millions of adults of both sexes, in cities and rural districts are till this hour as ignorant of letters as the people were generally during the middle ages." 4

Eleven years later (1851) a witness contributing material to a Parliamentary Commission said that he had never known of a poor man taking in the Penny Magazine and sales of Chambers' Journal were almost entirely confined to the middle classes, mainly small shopkeepers, but not those dependent on weekly wages, and certainly not those of the working classes earning less than 16s. a week[5].

Altick quotes an analysis of the London Catalogue of Books for the period 1816-51 which shows that of 42,260 titles 10,300 were theological works, as opposed to 3,500 works of fiction, 3,400 of drama and poetry and 2,450 of science. Many libraries, particularly those with evangelical affiliations, and mechanics' institutes eschewed fiction, and Altick shows that as late as 1896 only 334 districts, many of them small, had levied the library rate. 46 districts with populations of over 20,000, among them Bath, Bury, Hastings, Huddersfield and Glasgow, had refused to do so. Village libraries, often kept by clergymen, mainly consisted of tracts and religious material, and novels were usually strictly banned. Even so these were often opposed by farmers, who, if they did not read themselves, did not like to see the labouring class becoming wiser than themselves[6].

Altick tends to accept estimates of literacy available in 1957, which consist principally of the work of R.K.Webb. However, he quotes a salutary statistic from 1855 which considered that of adults who were unable to read more than a half were in that condition (of having forgotten how to read)

> "not from never having been to school, but because, after leaving school, they had met with nothing to tempt them to exercise the faculty they had acquired, and that faculty had died from sheer inanition." 7

R.K.Webb, of whose important study of the British Working Class Reader Altick makes extensive use[8], concentrates his research on the attempts of the upper and middle classes to communicate with the working classes, especially during the points of political and economic tension during his chosen period. In this and other articles Webb has usually posited a higher reading ability in the working classes than more cautious researchers would be prepared to accept. His extensive collection and consideration of statistics, considered earlier, point always to a higher reading ability than writing ability, and he tends to accept the higher estimate as an indication of reasonable reading proficiency. However, much of the evidence concerning the failure of one class to communicate with another, and this is his central thesis, tends to support the view that the reading ability of many working class men, particularly agricultural labourers, was low, and that the failure to communicate lay not only in the inappropriate techniques of the would-be communicators but also in the defective skills of the potential recipients.

Webb analyses in detail the aspirations and reasons for failure of the SDUK and quotes Brougham who lamented that 'taxes on knowledge' prevented the Society from 'wrapping up good information of a lasting value in news' which might have improved the popularity of its publications[9]. There is much evidence to suggest that those who read the publications of the SDUK, and the penny magazine sold well for a time, were of the artisan classes, and this appears to have been true of a considerable proportion of the readership of radical publications. The 'White Dwarf' is cited, for example, by Webb as a journal

intended for mechanics, artisans, shopkeepers and petty clerks "on the blurring borderlines between the classes"[10].

Webb explores contemporary beliefs that much of the agricultural unrest, rick burning and destruction of machinery in the 1830's was fomented by the press, but concludes that newspapers reached few agricultural labourers of most counties until at least the 1850's and that the real incitements were strong necessity and fear, fanned by radical talk. He similarly concludes that the spate of pamphleteering aimed at putting rioting down by reason was ineffectual; many of these were lengthy, abstruse and, as the Spectator commented at the time, too long for general perusal, too elaborate, and unlikely to penetrate to the agricultural labourers who had been the principal offenders[11].

Webb cites a particularly interesting piece of empirical research carried out by one of Francis Place's correspondents in Norfolk in 1831. Acting on the hypothesis that there was a mass of ignorance which would take generations to remove, particularly among agricultural workers, he bought six copies of the SDUK's penny address on the destruction of machinery and tried it on three labourers who, he claimed, were steady men of good sense who could read and write decently. It was clear that although they were able to decipher the print they could not understand the meaning. The correspondent ended his letter with the telling statement, "Our labourers understand Cobbett but do not read him."

Louis James has revealed by his research into popular fiction the various levels of readership which entrepreneurial publishers catered for[12]. His work has concentrated on London, which appears not only to have been the main producer, but also to a large extent the main consumer of serial literature. However, we know from autobiographical and contemporary accounts that many of Reynolds' and Lloyd's publications could be bought in larger West Country centres like Cheltenham and Bristol, though it is difficult to estimate readership.

James provides valuable background information concerning the reading public in his early chapters, and several references to specific occupational groups merit consideration. In describing lower class libraries of the second half of the 18th century which charged between 1d and 3d a volume he quotes Fanny Burney who wrote that they were open to 'every butcher and baker, cobbler and tinker, throughout the three kingdoms'. Thomas Kelly organised an elaborate sales network in the early 19th century to sell his folio family Bible and sold 40,000 copies, mainly to servants and better-paid artisans. "The Mirror of Literature, Amusement and Instruction", a lower-class equivalent of Blackwood's, which regular booksellers refused to handle, was sold by agents: a shoemaker in Manchester, a tinman in Coventry, whom its publisher had recruited in various parts of the country. At one stage this was selling 80,000 copies per week. It is clear from these and other references that those spoken of as being prominent among working readers were usually members of those occupational groups who show, as groups, high percentages of literacy.

Margaret Dalziel in her analysis of 'Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago' is primarily concerned to consider the attitudes expressed by contemporary commentators and the attitudes and values implicit in the fiction itself. It is not part of her brief to consider who read the literature in question. Her careful analysis of popular fiction of the mid-century reveals a number of parallels, particularly in content and attitude, to chapbook literature which we attempt to emphasise.

Many contemporary critics, while accepting that stories of the kind which appeared in Family Herald, Reynolds's Miscellany etc. were not much like real life, felt that they departed from it in a not altogether unacceptable way. Some felt that melodrama was not an altogether unsuitable diet for the half-educated mind, that hard, repetitive work was a strong enough antidote to the ill effects of fanciful exaggeration and the worst consequences of reading

such tales would be a transitory fit of unreal excitement[13]. The same commentator considered that the love of the marvellous which it is part of the function of the romance writer to minister to is deeply rooted in mankind: that the wiser course of those who sought to raise their fellow men was to recognise what they could not alter and attempt to refine a taste characteristic of the race since early time. Contemporary accounts are supported by Miss Dalziel, who considered that however silly, and occasionally vicious, some periodicals of the mid-nineteenth century may have been, they would have brought a striving of the imagination and a sense of release to many whose lives were extremely wretched[14].

Her analysis of the character and attitude stereotypes which a wide range of popular literature exemplified is often similar to those stereotypes which we find in earlier chapbooks, though sometimes they are noticeably at variance.

Heroines, for example, were frequently physically weak and in a hierarchy of characteristics the 'feeling heart' was considered more important than intellectual acumen.

> "For, while the poetry of feeling was her element, Harriet was not an intellectual person: her heart supplied the place of mind." 15

Conversely, as we find in many chapbooks and particularly the 'Tewkesbury Tales', women are shown to be cunning and tough-minded, though they usually exercise these features in the pursuit or retention of their loved ones.

An area of agreement in which popular fiction never seems to waver in the period being considered is the attitude by writers to female chastity. As this was regarded not "just as a virtue but virtue itself"[16], it followed that loss of it was the worst disaster which could befall a woman. The phrase 'worse than death' was used in all seriousness and no degree of repentance or suffering could restore the fallen woman in her own eyes or that of society[17]. As Hardy's novel 'Tess of the D'Urbervilles' showed by the reactions it provoked as late as 1891, whatever the circumstances of her seduction, most critics and readers

could not accept Hardy's, no doubt deliberately provocative, subtitle to the work 'A pure woman'.

As we shall see in an analysis of chapbook material, seduction under various guises is a major theme and its outcome is almost invariably a series of misfortunes culminating in disaster and death. Quasi chapbook material, Hannah More's "Cheap Repository Tales", for example, do not dwell on this theme and although morality is at the core of her work, sexual promiscuity is rarely mentioned.

Miss Dalziel found that popular fiction tended to make major assumptions concerning relationships between the sexes. These were that it was relatively easy to find and fall in love with the right partner in life, after which, having overcome a few external obstacles, marriage followed. Once married, only considerable folly can induce you even to think of breaking your marriage vows. If the laws of society ~~were~~ are flouted in this respect the result is permanent misery[18]. Chapbook literature ignores the possibility of this but takes the situation one step further back: men who renege upon their promise of marriage (usually given in order to precipitate seduction) are shown not only to be morally wrong but pursued by revenge or disaster in various forms.

An interesting change of emphasis between chapbook literature and the popular fiction described by Miss Dalziel is the depiction of the hero. Bodily health was not necessarily considered a virtue. A typical presentation is couched in these terms:

> "A very interesting-looking person, very gentlemanlike in his appearance, being pale, but with a particularly refined cast of countenance, evidently suffering from ill-health." 19

The stereotypes of chapbook literature are far more rugged than this, and, often having their origins in Chaucer and Boccaccio, have a certain earthy plausibility. Popular literature of the mid-nineteenth century reinforces the role of the husband whose duty it is to assert his authority: a husband who fails to rule

his household is not only miserable in himself but endangers the welfare of every member of the family.

The role of the family is not a common motif in chapbook literature, but the tracts of Hannah More assume its centrality; most of the disasters which she recounts can be traced directly to the failure of the head of the family to exercise control over himself or his charges. In these as in much of the popular fiction of the mid 19th century there is a concentration on stock situations and relationships among characters which avoids most of the real problems of life. When it does tackle a real problem it provides a facile solution ignoring, as Margaret Dalziel comments, the fact that for many of our problems there is no real solution at all[20]. Debt is one of these problems, and its converse, thrift, is frequently lauded and exemplified in these tales, as in those of Hannah More. The chapbook solution to pecuniary problems is even more unrealistic, relying as is usually the case on riches derived from lucky adventures or magic.

One of the most consistent attitudes expressed in the novels noted by Miss Dalziel is that the life of fashionable society, though so exciting and interesting as to be worth writing about at length, was yet utterly worthless[21]. The same ambivalent attitude is present in much chapbook literature, though often the hero or heroine, usually by remarkable deeds followed by lavish reward in the first instance, or great beauty linked with a shrewd deployment of its value in the second, may break through the barrier of class and become a member of the aristocracy. Either way the reader was able, albeit vicariously, to achieve the imaginary pleasures of the powerful and rich. The popular press may be said to continue the tradition.

Hannah More's Tales, concerned as they are to stem social discontent and instill a proper respect for a hierarchical society, goes some way to showing that not only do the great have problems, they have faults as well. A theme which is shared by all of these genres is that marriage is an end, a climax

and a reward, a feature they enjoy in common with most folk and fairy tales.

It is sometimes stated, notably by Elizabeth Eisenstein[22], that there was a considerable psychological gulf in the 19th century between members of the "hearing" public fostered largely on what she calls a fairly 'sleazy' culture based on the mass production of antiquated mediaeval romances and their contemporaries who belonged to an early modern reading one. However, though this may be true of some, it may be less true of a reading public who were mainly enjoying a diet of the kind of formula literature described by Miss Dalziel, for this appears to have been as fundamentally reactionary and untrue to human experience as the chapbooks it replaced.

CHAPTER V (ii)

Three contemporary commentators: Lackington, Lovett and Adams.

Three autobiographies of men born and brought up in the West Country help to illuminate some of the obscure areas of our knowledge concerning the reading habits of the working man. The first of these, James Lackington, was born in Wellington, Somerset, in 1746. His father was a journeyman shoemaker who later became an alcoholic and his mother was the daughter of a poor weaver. His autobiography, or the first 46 years of it, was written as a series of 47 letters to a friend and triply dedicated to the Public, to respectable booksellers, to sordid booksellers.

Lackington's schooling came to an early end when his mother was no longer able to afford the 2d weekly. For a time he helped nurse the younger children at home, then had two spells of employment selling pies and Almanacs on a few market days before and after Christmas. At 14 he was apprenticed to a shoemaker in Taunton who was an Anabaptist. The latter's library consisted of a school-sized Bible, Watts' Psalms and Hymns, Foot's Tract on Baptism, Culpepper's Herbal, 'The History of the Gentle Craft', an imperfect volume of Receipts in Physic, Surgery & Co and the Ready Reckoner. One of the sons of the family was converted by a Wesleyan preacher and the ensuing religious controversy in the household inspired Lackington to learn to read so that he could have the means of making up his own mind. He paid 1½d an hour to his master's youngest son for reading lessons. Subsequently, at sixteen, he was converted to Methodism himself and spent much of his spare time reading the Bible, reading 'methodistical' books, learning hymns and hearing sermons.

Having moved to Bristol, Lackington's opportunities for improving himself were increased. He went to the theatre frequently and describes a popular actor, Ned Shuter, who had difficulty in reading the parts he had to play and, apart from being able to sign an order, was unable to write at all. Lackington was also unable to write at this time (he was about 19), but this did not prevent his composing several songs, one of which was sold for a guinea.

Some, he claims, were printed by a Bristol printer and sung about the streets by ballad singers.

He and some his fellow journeymen had a taste for reading, but even in a city like Bristol it was difficult for them to emerge from their educational obscurity. As they did not know what to ask for they were ashamed to go into booksellers' shops and Lackington, who later prospered as a bookseller, tells of large numbers who,having "discovered an enquiring mind", were totally at a loss what to ask for and had no friend to direct them.

At a stall in St. James's Fair he bought Hobb's translation of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey and Walter's paraphrase of Epictetus's Morals. He found the former difficult, but was delighted by the stoical philosophy of the latter. Following this qualified success Lackington bought large numbers of books, mostly of a religious nature, but in addition he bought Gay's Fables, Pomfret's Poems and Milton's Paradise Lost. In order to read these he and his fellows slept only three hours in 24 and often took turns for one to read while the others worked.

He was still unable to write and dictated letters to one of his friends, but subsequently he learnt to write himself. In 1774 he opened a combined bookshop and shoemaker's in London and though the first venture failed he ultimately succeeded, mainly by selling publishers' remainders cheaply and splitting sets and selling volumes separately.

Apart from the light shed on the difficulties which hedged about the would-be self-educator, Lackington also throws light on an aspect of 18th century schooling. When children's only reader was the Bible, he observes, "they did not make such rapid progress as they have since when they have been pleased, entertained and instructed" (with books more suitable for them) and developed a liking for books which would last, in many, as long as life.

Lackington's claim that during his life-time the reading habits of the nation had undergone a transformation (i.e. during the 18th century) deserves consideration. In a much quoted passage he asserts that even

> "the poorer sorts of farmers, and even the poor country people in general ... shorten the winter nights by hearing their sons and daughters read tales, romances etc. and on entering their houses, you may see Tom Jones, Roderic Random, and other entertaining books, stuck up on their bacon racks. If John goes to town with a load of hay, he is charged to be sure not to forget to bring home 'Peregrine Pickle's Adventures', and when Dolly is sent to market to sell her eggs, she is commissioned to purchase 'The History of Pamela Andrews'. In short, all ranks and degrees now READ." 23

This romanticised vision, taken by some commentators to indicate a cultural plateau, needs considerable qualification, as Altick points out. Quite apart from the high cost of books (any one of these novels would have cost Dolly several times the proceeds of her basket of eggs), quantification of readers at the end of the 18th century suggests that the bulk of those working in agriculture would have been incapable of reading these: Lackington is no doubt generalising about the whole country from the particular successes of his own bookselling experience in London.

Similar difficulties were encountered also by William Lovett, who was born in Newlyn in Cornwall. In his autobiography published in 1876 he recalls that the town possessed no bookshop, scarcely any newspaper taken in except by the gentry, and a considerable proportion of the adult population who were unable to read. In the market town (presumably Penzance) there was one bookseller's shop and with the exception of Bibles and prayer-books, spelling books and a few religious works the only books in circulation for the masses were a few story books and romances "filled with absurdities about giants, spirits, goblins and supernatural horrors". However, the price of these precluded him from buying any, though he was sometimes able to borrow some. The Bible, therefore, and prayer and hymn books and a few religious tracts, together with fragments of old magazines and occasionally one of the

"nonsensical pamphlets" earlier described were all that he read until he was 21. Lovett was able to write and often composed love letters for his friends and taught many of them to write, which helped his own development at the same time.

He contrasts his cultural deprivation with the situation which obtained at the time when he was writing: the comparative advantages available to young people, the multiplicity of cheap books, newspapers, lectures and other means of instruction. Conversely, as a young man he had a desire for knowledge but neither books to enlighten nor a teacher to instruct.

Another autobiography published at approximately the same time (1868) indicates that the Londoner who wished to read or educate himself had rather better opportunities. Thomas Wright[24] described the wares of itinerant booksellers who had offered a considerable variety of works of all sizes from 25 volume editions to 8-paged pamphlets, and ranging in content from Church services, books of sermons and technical works on the arts and sciences to lives of highwaymen and comic reciters. These were frequently presented in attractive, if tendentious, guises: so all works having the remotest bearing upon law, medicine, gardening or other professional subjects were described under the general heading "Every man his own lawyer, doctor etc." . Works touching however slightly on maritime affairs were usually described as chronicles of the lives and adventures of pirates and sea-robbers and works relating in any way to crime or the criminal classes were offered for sale as the live s of highwaymen. Voyages, particularly accounts of circumnavigations, were very popular, whereas poetry and scientific works sold badly and were correspondingly cheap. Wright considered that street booksellers might be considered as powerful members of the Society for the Diffusion of Knowledge, since by their means knowledge, in the shape of books, was circulated among large numbers of the working classes to whom books rarely penetrated through the ordinary channels of book circulation.

The third West-countryman by birth was W.E.Adams, who was born in Cheltenham in 1832[25]. In writing of penny dreadfuls and cheap literature of his boyhood (c. 1840) Adams claims that there was little demand as large numbers of the people were unable to read. The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge made creditable but not altogether successful efforts to supply such want as existed. Their Penny Magazine he described as full of facts but rather dry and not very enlivening. He preferred the Family Herald and among fiction Reynolds' Miscellany and Lloyd's 'penny dreadfuls'. Among titles which he remembered were Ada the Betrayed; Adele, or the Pirates of the Isle; The Curse, or the Outlaws of the Old Tower; The Old Monastery, or the Deed of Blood; Gonzalo the Bandit, or the Bereaved Father; The Black Mantle, or the Murder at the Old Ferry; The Smuggler King, or the Foundling of the Wreck; Villeroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle.

Adams could not afford to buy them himself, but was able to borrow copies occasionally, including a bound version of "Villeroy, or the Horrors of Zindorf Castle". He defends these and chapbooks as they encouraged and developed a taste for reading which could later attempt more challenging material. In his case it was Young's 'Night Thoughts' which marked the transition from popular to higher literature: a book which Lackington, almost a century earlier, had bought with money intended for the Christmas dinner[26].

Certain common themes emerge from this consideration of largely self-educated workmen. The first is that none was the son of a labourer: they all came from artisan, albeit fairly impoverished, backgrounds. There are strong indications of informal educational exchanges at work, though the examples given tend to operate laterally within the limits of family or occupational group. Lackington, more clearly than the others, shows that a considerable time could elapse between learning to read and learning to write, particularly if schooling had been curtailed. The others had had rather more formal schooling and Adams had been to a National School which had a very narrow

curriculum and later to a (Wesleyan) British School where the teaching was intelligible and interesting and singing and other exercises entertaining.

The comparative advantages of town dwellers over remote or rural areas emerges strongly, though even there the availability of reading matter at seemingly low prices was beyond the purchasing power of the poor. One infers from Adams' narrative that neither he nor most of his contemporaries were able to buy Reynolds' serialised stories. Although supplies of secondhand and remaindered books were greater in London, and the itinerant booksellers were more helpful to diffident purchasers, there is a strong sense in which books made available in this way were left-overs from the rich man's library. The few attempts, which after 1850 became a flood, to woo this potential audience as, for example, the SDUK's Penny Magazine, were described by Adams, an enthusiastic reader, as dry and unenlivened.

Another factor emerges strongly: that their struggles upwards were against a sombre background of poor opportunity and widespread ignorance. Adams declared later in his life that it was difficult to realise the state of education in the first half of the 19th century.

> "To be able to read and write was a distinction then. Anybody who could do more than that was almost accounted a phenomenon." 27

He added the reservation that he was speaking of the poorer classes. His assessment is particularly interesting inasmuch as Cheltenham appears to have high literacy figures for the mid century: for 1845 and 1855, 86.6% and 91.6% respectively: young contemporaries of Adams would have been marrying in approximately 1855 and thereafter. We should be cautious of assessments made by one whose own standards were high and similarly from accepting the somewhat roseate picture of opportunity which several of these writers imply for the 1860's. Equally, we need to avoid considering these very determined and forceful people as paradigmatic of a large body of autodidactic workmen.

CHAPTER V (iii)

Anglican and Nonconformist tracts and publications.

Tracts

Louis James has written that tracts made up a significant proportion of rural reading at least until the middle of the 19th century, as he found when he was working in Lincolnshire[28]. There are also clear indications that large numbers of these were circulated or distributed in Bristol. One major difficulty which faces the historian in this field is in discovering to what extent tracts were read, and contemporary observers had similar difficulties. The statistics of print-numbers and circulation, particularly when applied to gratuitous publications, do not necessarily bear much relationship to the levels of penetration. Inevitably, much of the evidence we have is based on anecdote and hearsay rather than empirical data.

Understandably, this tends to be contradictory and depends largely on the stance, and sect, of the observer. Louis James considers that in the country where the remains of the feudal system softened the hatred of 'charity' and literature was much scarcer, tracts were favourably received. He cites a report to the Friends Tract Association from Lincolnshire which tells of tracts read by from 10 to 15 persons per copy[29].

Similarly in Bristol their reception was generally favourable, as indicated by a Bristol distributor who claimed that he could not recall a single instance in which his tracts had not been favourably received, the recipients frequently expressing interest in reading them[30].

Gratuitous distribution, however, is a different matter from selling in a competitive market, and there are varying estimates concerning the willingness of the poor to pay for tracts. Of the Cheap Repository tracts, G.H.Spinney considers that the proportion bought directly from hawkers by poorer people was probably not very high[31]. R.K.Webb states that the poor avoided buying tracts, but the sales to the upper classes were very large. The tract tradition, that is the habit of distributing tracts to servants and leaving tracts on social and charitable visits, remained strong in the 19th century[32].

Hannah More imitated chapbooks in their circulation methods as well as format: by offering them at a lower price she was able to have them sold by hawkers, and their immense circulation, it is claimed, made them a commercial success[33]. Spinney, op. cit., doubted this and an antagonist Methodist writing in the 20th century claims that huge numbers of the publications could not be sold in this country and were sent to Africa[34]. The same writer considered them to be

> "revoltingly inept and tedious. Perhaps nothing could have been better meant, but certainly nothing could have been more ineffective."

Strong words unaccompanied by objective evidence.

However, large numbers were undoubtedly published and it is claimed that several millions were produced between 1795 and 1798 by two printing houses, Samuel Hazard at Bath and John Marshall in London, working for Hannah More[35].

Henry Mayhew, writing of the metropolitan situation in the middle of the 19th century, was informed that of 40 costermongers who received tracts from the hands of passing benefactors scarcely one could read[36]. Whether or not this was an exaggeration it does act as a salutary reminder that, as we have seen in Part I of this study, large numbers of the urban and rural poor would probably have been unable to read and comprehend a simple tract, during the period studied. Another of Mayhew's informants, after 19 years' experience of selling 'patters' in the streets, considered that a foolish nonsensical thing would sell twice as fast as a good moral sentimental one, and, as long as it lasted, a good murder would outsell them all. He had also tried selling religious tracts, but found no encouragement.

> "I did the 'Infidel Blacksmith' but that would not sell. 'What is happiness ? A dialogue between Ellen and Mary' - that was no go. No more was 'The Sorrows of Seduction'. So I was driven into the comic standing patters." [36a]

A committee investigating Westminster schools in the 1830's found no publication of the Religious Tract Society and only one instance of the use of the S.P.C.K.'s Saturday Magazine. Agents in another investigation in the

East End of London obtained the impression that of all the books found, and more than one quarter were without any serious books at all, the Bible and Testament were least read. Tracts might be used once, or not read at all and thrown away. They might be kept simply for the inspection of the clergyman or the visitor on his subsequent rounds[37]. Tracts were often regarded as a means of gaining an entry into working class homes, both when distributed and when collected, and some societies were more concerned that their distributors should converse with those they visited rather than that their tracts should be read.[37a]

In schools, also, there was a dearth of material produced by the R.T.S., S.P.C.K. and S.D.U.K., although considerably more expensive, unsubsidised publications were in use. The reasons for this were considered to be a combination of objection to being the beneficiaries of charity and the possibilities of discount obtainable by teachers from commercial publishers[38].

S.G.Green, writing in 1850, throws interesting light on the relatively low impact of religious tracts and kindred material. He cited figures to show that the circulation of the unstamped press on the side of'moral corruption' was considerably greater than that of the entire religious output. He considered that religious literature circulated mainly among 'professing Christians of the middle classes', while more unsavoury sheets found their way, in a very large proportion, to the homes and haunts of the poor[39].

The reasons for this were partly the faulty economics of distribution: secular publications gave a profit of 42% while religious publications gave a profit of only 25%, with the result that back-street bookshops were filled with Reynolds and Cleave and excluded publications of the R.T.S. and its equivalents. But a more important difference was that of tone and style: infidel publications showed a real knowledge of the people for whom they were intended, which could not be said of many religious publications.

> "Their inflexible style of phraseology, together with a uniform mode of thought, impart a technical, elusive character to the whole teaching, and effectually bar its access to any mind unfamiliar with the dialect of the Sanctuary." 40

Green is overstating his case to a degree, for, as we shall hope to show later, Hannah More, whose tracts were still being published and circulated up until the middle of the 19th century, was largely successful in imitating the outward and visible attraction of sensationalist literature. Webb's considered judgement was that tracts were largely read by the middle classes and failed to convert the unconverted[41]. A later analysis of the audience for whom the Cheap Repository Tales were apparently intended would tend to support that view, if we include in the middle classes tradesmen and artisans.

We have some indication of the effectiveness or otherwise of religious publishing as it relates to Bristol in Fripp's survey of the Condition of the Poor in 1838. His agent found that 57.4% of the 5,981 families had religious books (Bible or prayer-book or both) and a further 15.8% had other books or tracts or parts of some, making a total of 73.2%. 26.8% of the families had no books or tracts of any kind. In the introduction to the survey Fripp notes:

> "In stating the number of families in possession of books, it has been thought best to include under this head all who had any tracts or mere portions of volumes which not unfrequently occurs."

It is interesting to note, in passing, that the 73.2% of families having books or printed material compares closely with the 77.5% of heads of families who claimed the ability to read. [41a]

Clearly, the possession of books does not indicate that they were read, and one cannot infer from the absence of books an absolute ignorance of reading material; but the picture suggested by these statistics is a bleak one, and further anecdotal evidence to be cited later would indicate that the parish of SS. Philip and Jacob was not a reading area. Some 25 years before this survey, in 1812, Stephen Prust made excursions into the out-parish of SS.

Philip and Jacob to take down the names of those who were willing to subscribe small weekly sums for purchasing the Scriptures etc. Many of those who were questioned observed that they would be glad to have a Bible but that it would be little use as they could not read[42].

Judging from the activities of the Bristol and Gloucestershire branches of the SPCK other areas in the two counties were rather more fertile ground. The Bristol branch of the SPCK was formed in 1810, the year when the Society decided to substitute a system of diocesan and district committees. Prior to this the SPCK relied upon its corresponding members, mostly country clergymen, to order packets of literature at Members' prices and undertake the task of local distribution.[42a] From December 1818 to December 1819 178 Bibles, 94 Testaments, 548 prayer-books and 87 Psalters were distributed, and in addition about 41,000 small books such as catechisms, parables, school-books, forms of prayer and about 350 bound books, to the amount of about £122 in all, which were sold to the members (103 at this time) at the Society's price and were subsequently given gratuitously to the poor[43].

The report which contained these statistics goes on to congratulate the Society and each other on the merits of an institution which provided so many books of divine authority as well as human excellence for those who would not otherwise have been able to procure them. Numbers of publications bought and distributed by the Bristol Branch for some following years were:

	1824	1826	1827
Bibles	161	296	298
Testaments	198	285	327
Prayer Books	1508	1821	1321
Books and tracts	7148	10860	12208

Details for Gloucestershire are hard to establish, as the District Committees frequently failed to contribute to the annual report. One exception was Stow-on-the-Wold, which reported in 1831 that 72 Bibles, 167 Testaments, 479 Prayer Books and Psalters and 2206 books and tracts had been distributed. In addition to supplying material at Members' prices the Society also received requests like the following from a curate in Stroud in 1814, who, having established in his parish a Sunday School Library, or Cottagers' Book Club, made application for a gratuitous grant of a complete set of the Society's tracts bound up in volumes for the use of the said library. The Society's response is not known, but one reflects that SPCK tracts usually measured approximately 2" x 2½", small enough to go into a purse or pocket, and would have presented some problems for a binder.

Although the Bristol branch appears to be quite active in the period in question, one might think that the numbers of publications distributed were small relative to the population of the city and county. On the other hand, the presence of Bibles or prayer books in the possession of over 50% of families in a poor area of Bristol by 1838 testifies to the cumulative effect of their intervention.

The aims of the tract publishers are easier to identify than the success of their operations. At one level they were evangelising treatises which attempted to preach the Gospel to the unconverted. At another level they were concerned with the improvement of morals and later the combating of anti-fidelity and revolutionary pamphlets. Although Laqueur considers that direct propaganda of the kind disseminated by Hannah More was rare[45], interesting examples have been commented on by Barrie Trinder in his studies of tracts as sources of local history[46]. He has found numerous examples of early marriages attacked mainly on the grounds, as in the anonymous "Our Own Times" set in Gloucestershire, that they lead to large families and dependence

on parish relief. He has also found examples extolling the merits of literacy. "Tommy Sole", by Sarah Maria Lloyd, argues the benefits of vaccination and attacks working-class illiteracy. A man was forced to give up his job as a hedger and ditcher through rheumatism and was offered an indoor place, but could not take it up as he could neither read nor write and had to be supported by his wife, who went out weeding. In Mrs. Cameron's "The Oakengates", Wake, a collier, begins to learn to read as a consequence of his religious beliefs[47]. It is interesting to note that both tract writers have chosen occupations which show a high degree of illiteracy for most of the period in question. One is bound to speculate on the nature of the intended audience; clearly they could not be intended for illiterates themselves. The possibility of their being read aloud by a well-meaning middle-class visitor to benighted cottagers seems to be incredible condescension even in a condescending age. Perhaps they were mainly for the benefit of children to spur them to acquire literacy, or means of self-congratulation for those who had. Certainly many tracts were concerned with the duties of parents towards their children and the converse of this. The parents of a boy blinded by playing with gunpowder bought on the Sabbath were given this homily:

> "Had your son been brought up to attend church regularly, had he been taken there by yourselves and had he been restrained by your commands and your example from buying on the Sabbath, this sad affair could never have happened." 48

Hannah More was also adept at manufacturing disasters for the sinner or profligate, but however implausible these tales may seem to us, they were probably more keenly read than closely reasoned polemic, such as many of the Wesleyan tracts with titles such as 'A word to a swearer', 'A word to a drunkard' and 'A word to a smuggler'.

The Religious Tract Society had laid down as one of their rules that the tract should contain pure truth flowing from the fountain of the New Testament, uncontaminated with error, undisturbed with human systems; clear as a crystal, like the fountain of life[49]. However, many tracts were as patently fictitious

as their chapbook equivalents. Perhaps in what was seen as the continual struggle with immorality, fiction was a justifiable weapon.

The impetus for Hannah More's tracts and her enthusiastic support among many of the upper classes whose attitudes towards the moral reform of the lower orders had been relatively indifferent, was the fear of the effect which revolutionary pamphlets might have. As Hannah More wrote in a letter to Zachary Macaulay in January 1796,

> "Vulgar and indecent penny books were always common, but speculative infidelity, brought down to the pockets and capacities of the poor, forms a new era in our history." 50

The philosophical basis which is implicit in many of the Cheap Repository Tracts may be summed up in Hannah More's own words:

> "Beautiful is the order of Society, when each according to his place, pays willing honour to his superiors, when servants are prompt to obey their masters, and masters deal kindly with their servants, when high, low, rich and poor, when landlord and tenant, master and workman, minister and people, sit down each satisfied with his own place." 51

Another statement of her intentions is printed as a preface to "Tales for the Common Man" in the collected works of Hannah More. The motive which impelled her was the desire to improve the habits and raise the principles of the common people at a time when their dangers and temptations, moral and political, were multiplied beyond the example of any former period. The plan was established not only to counteract vice and profligacy on the one hand, but error, discontent and false religion on the other. She added that as, from a variety of causes, an appetite for reading had been increasing among the inferior classes in the country, she considered it expedient to supply such wholesome food as might give a new direction to their taste, and abate their relish for those corrupt and inflammatory publications which the consequences of the French Revolution had so fatally poured in. The success she measured in terms of their sales: two millions within the first year. We shall consider their content and attempt to gauge their effect in a later section.

The SPCK also reacted vigorously to what were usually termed infidel and blasphemous publications. This was a protracted matter, as can be seen from references in the Society's minute books from at least 1819-1832. The secretary of the Bristol Branch in a meeting of December 30, 1819, noted the unhappy prevalence of blasphemous and seditious publications and that the Society had set aside £1,000 to counteract these. He noted, also, the publication by a member of the Committee of a pamphlet entitled "Some account of the Life and Death and Principles of Thomas Paine." The Committee thanked J.S.Harford for his excellent and well-timed defence of religion and government as expressed therein[52].

In the General Report of the Society for 1831 details were given of various publications which were to be reprinted and these included: 'The folly and danger of reading irreligious publications'; Cobbett's 'Reflections on Religion': 'A Conversation between two poor men on the Duties of the Poor'; the Honourable J. Erskine's Speech on the prosecution of the publisher of the 'Age of Reason'; 'Age of Reason or Erskine's Defence of Newton, Boyle, Locke, Hale and Milton versus Thomas Paine'; Miller's 'Thoughts for the Labouring Classes', among many others of similar substance, including a few written some years before by Hannah More.

Altick considers that beneath the veneer of altruism could be seen the image of class interest[53], and certainly the tone of condescension is particularly noticeable to a modern reader. This is less true of Methodist tracts and publications produced by the indefatigable John Wesley during his own lifetime and continued until the present day. Wesley's dictum "Reading Christians will be knowing Christians" was backed up by an extensive range of publications which catered for most of the physical and spiritual needs of his extended flock and, within some limitations, their educational and cultural needs as well. Many of them undoubtedly found buyers outside the sect and Wesley's "Primitive Physic", a detailed, but not particularly enlightened, guide to diseases and

their cures, was a best-seller. An interesting feature of early Methodist publications is their considerable variation in difficulty of vocabulary and syntax. Consideration of their readability levels reveals a wide spectrum of difficulty and there is implicit evidence to suggest that this is calculated rather than accidental. In his introduction to an annotated version of the New Testament, Wesley stated that he wrote chiefly for plain unlettered men who understood only their mother tongue 'and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls.' The notes, in fact, are measurably more difficult than the text, but even so there are stylistic indications that he was attempting to keep to his terms of reference. In writing on more abstruse topics, however, such as "A Treatise on Justification" or "The Character of a Methodist", he presupposes literate readers capable of following logical and intricate argument. At the other end of the spectrum are tracts addressed to swearers, drunkards, smugglers (3) and a number of other representatives of anti-social activities. Wesley and his associate Coke instituted a Society for the Distribution of Religious Tracts among the Poor in 1782. However, Wesley had been publishing tracts since 1745 - for example, 'A Word to the Streetwalker', 'A Condemned Malefactor', 'A Freeholder just before the Election', etc. It is estimated that between 1825 and 1828 36,787,111 tracts were published: in a typical year like 1841 the total was 1,326,049[54]. Early tracts were published in Bristol by Felix Farley and William Pine. These are direct in vocabulary and style, and do not overestimate the reasoning abilities of their potential audiences, though, despite their simplicity, they may have overestimated their reading capacities. Like the SPCK tracts they were primarily designed for purchase in bulk and gratuitous distribution. Wesley and his fellow workers considered and reacted in print to a wide variety of experiences of the human condition. While direct experience of the depredations of smugglers may have been relatively remote to many Methodists, the problems of children and servants were within the

immediate concern of most; correspondingly there are a number of tracts which are addressed to those groups in such titles as "Directions to Servants", "Directions to Children": fairly uncompromising material which may be thought to parallel the strong impression of fear (unrelieved by the Wordsworthian adjunct of beauty) which pervades much Methodist autobiography of the early 19th century. Interestingly, they are considerably more difficult, judged by readability levels, than the other tracts mentioned, from which one may infer that Wesley rated the educational capacity of Methodist children and servants rather more highly.

The following is a list of some of the tracts published and distributed by Wesley and his followers:

A serious call to a holy life
Baxter's Call
The Nature and Design of Christianity
A Sermon on 'Awake, thou that Sleepest'
The Important Question
The Heavenly Footman
The Great Assize
The Good Steward
Sermon on the Trinity
The New Birth
The Way to the Kingdom
The Almost Christian
An Original Sin
On Salvation by Faith
The Spirit of Prayer
Token for Children
A Hymn to the God of Abraham
A Word to a Freeholder
Word to a sailor
" " soldier
" " Sabbath-breaker
" " drunkard
" " prostitute
" " condemned malefactor

In addition to the foregoing, Wesley produced a number of general educational works: a Short English Grammar in Nine Pages and a Complete English Dictionary in 144 pages, the latter being intended in Wesley's words to assist persons of common sense and no learning to understand the best English authors[56]. There were Wesleyan simplifications or transformations of popular works such as "Paradise Lost", Young's "Night Thoughts" and "Pilgrim's Progress". The latter, which one would imagine would be difficult to simplify further, is, in fact, abridged. Some of the vocabulary is more difficult than that of the original.

These Methodist publications appear to have been successful, and although no extensive statistics can be quoted to indicate the extent and depth of their dissemination, it is clear that they formed an important link in the strategic chain-mail of the sect and an important example of successful communication between those of professional backgrounds to those in predominantly artisan and commercial occupations. Though one would not accept Professor Halevy's suggestion that England, politically and socially chaotic, escaped ruin and revolution after the Napoleonic Wars mainly as a consequence of the work of Wesley and his followers[57], Methodism and other Nonconformist sects undoubtedly gave stability and a role to a particular sector of working groups who were finding a voice. However, Radicalism and irreligion were usually assumed to be synonymous, as is suggested by Lord Chief Justice Tindall's charge to the jury at the trial of the Chartists Frost, Williams, Jones and 35 others at Monmouth in December 1839:

> "I can suggest no remedy which can be applied successfully to counteract a state of mind and feeling so unhealthy and diseased, and infecting so large a portion of the community, except the diffusion of the benefits of religious education among the rising generation." 58

Although anecdotes concerning the emotional impact of Wesley and his preaching on the labouring force, particularly colliers, are extensively quoted, it is doubtful to what extent the movement enrolled membership from this sector, at least in the 18th century.

The position of the Methodists as social regulators is implied in Cobbett's attack of 1824:

> "The bitterest foes of freedom in England have been, and are, the Methodists. Amongst the people of the North they have served as spies and blood-money men." 59

The work and failure of the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge has been described and documented fully by R.K.Webb, Harold Smith, J.F.C. Harrison and others, and only a brief consideration of the Society's work will be considered here. Smith, writing of the Library of Useful Knowledge 1827-1846, considered that, though popular and selling reasonably well, it proved too difficult for many who bought the volumes. One criticism was that the language was not simple enough and that because of this the publications were primarily suitable for educated readers cnly. Working class people, for the most part, could not understand them, and Brougham, the chairman of the enterprise, became convinced himself "that more easy treatises are absolutely necessary"[60]. There followed the Library of Entertaining Knowledge, but a general conclusion emphasised by one of its publishers, Charles Knight, was that despite the intelligence, learning, industry and position of its organisers it failed because it failed to appeal to the genuine working classes[61]. Smith's analysis is that there was no community of interest between a prosperous middle class believing in salvation through education, science, individual self-help and the status quo, and a Radical, politically awakening but unenfranchised working class, underfed, badly housed, believing, out of sheer desperation, in collective self-help for a fully democratic society[62]. J.F.C. Harrison states the case even more forcibly: he considered that the main significance of the SDUK was that it was a middle-class attempt to diffuse bourgeois values and attitudes as widely as possible.

However, other publications continued to do this, though not perhaps

with the same element of middle class paternalism, in the second half of the century, and, indeed, in this. Arguably, they succeeded financially where the SDUK failed because their editorial ears were closer to the real educational standards of the people and were also in tune with their fundamental desire to be entertained rather than instructed. If instruction and enlightenment were an incidental part of the process then that seemed to be acceptable to the consumers.

CHAPTER V (iv)

Popular secular literature: chapbooks, penny numbers, and broadsheets.

Chapbooks, named after the chapmen who sold them (one who engages in barter or selling), have a lengthy history. Shakespeare gently parodies the ballads sold by Autolycus in 'The Winter's Tale':

> "Here's another ballad, of a fish, that appear'd upon the coast on Wednesday the fourscore of April, forty thousand fadom above water, and sung this ballad against the hard hearts of maids: it was thought she was a woman, and was turn'd into a cold fish for that she would not exchange flesh with one that loved her: the ballad is very pitiful, and as true."

Pepys collected ballads and chapbooks, and his library contained three volumes of these bound together. They were already old when Shakespeare wrote and Pepys collected, and as Raymond Williams suggests, they did not die so much as undergo transformation, for many early newspapers repeat the formulae of chapbooks, almanacs and similar literary genres[63]. As late as 1869 Charles Hindley found a newspaper vendor selling the Brighton Daily News using the patter of the 'Old Cocks' (sensational broadsheets). When questioned, he said that the days of cocks were finished: "cheap newspapers 'as done them up!"[64]

Some commentators consider that chapbooks were the main literary diet of those who could read in the 18th century, and there is evidence that they continued to be published and find buyers well into the 19th century. Victor Neuberg considers that the elements of superstition and imagination in chapbooks merit detailed investigation, for in any reconstruction of the world of the 18th century the values, assumptions and attitudes of the poor are important and the only clue to them exists in the books which they read and which often enshrined their own oral lore[65]. Neuberg freely admits that they were largely escapist in content, offering, at a superficial level, a retreat into the world of imagination far removed from the daily toil which was the

lot of the 18th century poor. He contrasts this with the religious tract which counselled acceptance of conditions, however harsh, and contentment with lives of unremitting labour, while holding fast to their Christian faith[66]. The popularity of chapbooks is more or less taken for granted by various writers in this field: Professor Collison, using much material from Hindley's introduction to "The Catnach Press", asserts that the supply of chapbooks, broadsheets and songs was widespread in the countryside. Fairs and markets were incomplete without the display of the latest offerings from the printers in the larger towns nearby. Pedlars visiting isolated farmhouses and cottages could be relied upon to include among their other wares a selection of penny readings, some of which at least would be tales of giants and witches to tempt the children[67]. A similarly somewhat fanciful and conjectural picture is conjured by Ashton, who describes these pennyworths suitable to everybody's taste and within the reach of anybody's purse, owing to their extremely low price, which

> "must, or ought to have, extracted every available copper in the village when the chapman opened his budget of brand new books." 68

Both accounts imply a rather higher incidence of literacy in the countryside than recent researches, including our own, would support. However, we must not exclude the possibility, for which there is a good deal of anecdotal evidence, that reading aloud was a popular pursuit, and in any case much chapbook material was designed to be sung - which clearly presupposes an audience. It is reasonable, then, to presume that large numbers of illiterates, particularly in rural areas, were able to share in the products of a literate culture. Neuberg makes a strong case for chapbooks as a repository of folklore and myth, and though this has not been investigated systematically, he considers that such research would throw a good deal of light upon the survival of age-old beliefs and also upon the mores of the 18th century poor[69]. Similarly he considers that chapbooks provide a continuity in the tradition of English fairy mythology. Like mediaeval romance these had been popular amongst educated people until about the middle of the

17th century, and they both declined at about this time. Through chapbooks children had immediate access to a very considerable range of traditional literature that their more sophisticated elders had outgrown. Neuberg believes that without chapbooks 18th century children would have been deprived of works which not only enriched their imagination but also provided opportunities for wonder and delight. Although Neuberg posits a wider reading public than we would, there are strong suggestions that if rural people could read anything then they would have been able to read chapbooks, and this would have been, for many, the most accessible and possibly the only form of printed material available apart from religious publications.

As we shall see in our detailed examination of a number of chapbooks published in Tewkesbury towards the end of the 18th century, many were by no means suitable for children, and although one tends to associate children's traditional stories with chapbooks, they were also an expression of bawdy and violence. As such they form a sub-stratum of literature which, as Louis James has shown, appears to have survived in various forms throughout the 19th century[70].

An examination of the titles which were printed and sold (c.1770) by J.Butler, High Street, Worcester, and sold also by S.Hazell, Gloucester; J.Cooper, in Kidderminster; G.Lewis and A.Gamidge in Worcester shows what was probably a fairly typical list, though it seems not to include some of the bawdier ballads which may be found in those printed by S.Harward at Tewkesbury.

Account of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal
Argalus and Parthenia
The Beggar of Bethnal Green
Book of Fate, or Universal Fortune Teller
Children in the Wood
Collection of Love Letters
Dr. Faustus
False Friend, 4 parts
Fortunatus
Friar and Boy, 2 parts in one
Gospel of Nicodemus, 2 parts
Gulliver's Travels
Gunpowder Plot
Guy, Earl of Warwick
Honest John and Loving Kate, 2 parts
Interpretation of Moles and Dreams
Jack Horner
King and Cobler 2 parts in one
Life and Death of Jane Shore
List of Fairs
Moll Flanders
Mother Bunch, 2 parts in one
Mother Shipton
New Art of Cookery
Nixon's Prophecy
Pamela in 2 parts
Parable of Dives and Lazarus Explained
Parents' best Gift
Parismus
Patient Grissel
Pirates, 3 parts
Robinson Crusoe
Shoemaker's Glory
Simple Simon
Sir Goffelin Denville
Sir Richard Whittington
Sleeping Beauty of the Wood
Smart's Jests 2 parts
Tale of Robin Hood
Thomas of Reading
Tom Hickathrift 2 parts
Tom Thumb, 2 parts
Trial of Wit, or a collection of Riddles.

Apart from the well known 'Children in the Wood' and the 'Seven Champions of Christendom' there is little here for children and, as we shall see when we look at some of the contents in greater detail, much which would generally be thought unsuitable.

A more varied list of chapbooks appears to have been published by S. Gamidge of Worcester, who had numerous outlets in that county and some in the northern part of Gloucestershire.

Songs and chapbooks printed for S.Gamidge, Worcester

Children in the wood
The Seven Champions of Christendom
Cat Skin
Death and the Lady
Oxford Tragedy, or Rosanna's Overthrow
Poor Robin's Dream
Plymouth Tragedy or Susan's Overthrow
Pretty Green Coat Boy
Squire Vernon's Fox Chace
The Famous Flower of Serving Men
The Wandering Prince of Troy
Choice Pennyworth of Wit
The Yarmouth Tragedy
The Golden Bull
Jane Shore
The Dorsetshire Miracle
Transported Felons
Teague's Ramble
Spanish Lady's Love to an English Captain
Country John's Unfortunate Ramble to London
The Somersetshire Tragedy
The Lamentable Ballad of the Lady's Fall
The Leeds Tragedy, or the Bloody Brother
The Humours of Rag Fair
The Gloucestershire Tragedy
Distrest Lady's Garland

List continued from previous page

Chevy Chace
The Bloody Gardener
The Berkshire Lady
The Wandering Shepherdess
The Factor's Garland
The Broken Contract
Bite upon Bite
Bristol Bridegroom, or the Ship's Carpenter's Love to the Merchant's Daughter
Anacreon's Feast
The Death of Sir Andrew Barton
New Mad Tom
The Cobler Wife's Discovery
The Disobedient Son and the Cruel Husband
The Welch Wedding
Fair Maudlin

Rather more of these are traditionally children's tales. In addition there are several chapbooks devoted to fortune-telling: the Book of Fate, Nixon's Prophecy and Mother Shipton. The latter, which was originally published in 1684, had a long history of popularity and was revised and published by Charles Hindley in 1862 at Brighton with additional prophecies forged by himself. This included the couplet:

"The world to an end shall come
In eighteen hundred and eighty-one."

This caused some panic in country districts, particularly in Somerset, people leaving their houses and spending the night in open fields or praying in churches, chapels or on hill-tops.[71] In 1877 his son reprinted it as a chapbook and included apparent previsions of motor-cars, steamships, submarines, the telegraph, radio, aircraft etc. These are still sometimes quoted as genuine[72].

Also included in this list are a number of abridged versions of popular novels: Gulliver's Travels, Pamela, Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders. Some indication of the measure of abridgement can be deduced from the fact that

chapbooks rarely contained more than sixteen pages. Many of the tales, like Patient Grissel (sic) are at least as old as Boccaccio, others appear to be more recent, for example the Book of Fairs and presumably the New Art of Cookery. Another interesting inclusion is the Collection of Love Letters, which were model letters provided for those who were unconfident of their own skills of composition.

Few chapbooks or lists have survived from Bristol publishers and there are indications that the London publishers, notably the Catnach Press, through their trade connections and distribution outlets catered for the Bristol trade rather than an indigenous press.

Comparatively large numbers of broadsheets and a few chapbooks published in Bristol are noted in Green's Bibliotheca Somersetiensis. Though few of these are now extant the brief summaries and often extensive titles give a fairly clear idea of their probable contents. The largest category consists of accounts of murder, execution, violent death and disaster. Three examples of these will probably suffice.

Gillham, Richard. Trial and execution of Richard Gillham for the wilful murder of Maria Bagnall at Bath. With Gillham's reflections in prison the night before his execution. 3 woodcuts.
I 204 Single Sheet. Bristol (182-)

Grinther, Thomas. A full and particular account of the melancholy death of Thomas Grinther and Jane Wetherett (in Beech Wood, Lansdown) who died from the effects of poison which they took by mutual consent rather than submit to be separated.
I 229 SS. Bristol (182-)

Berrington. The truly melancholy death of William Brooks of Berrington in Somersetshire, who put a period to his existence by cutting his throat with a razor, at the door of his sweetheart just as she was sitting down to her wedding dinner.
II 171 SS folio Bristol (182-)

Less violent are such broadsheets as that which describes the character and sufferings of Anna Bowker who perished from the inclemency of the weather in an outhouse near her own residence, at Charlton, on Saturday night last, December 23rd 1826.

II 185 S.S. fol. Bristol 1826

or

The account of the trial and acquittal (at Bridgwater) of Doctor Thomas Draper, alias Dr. Touch'em (humble in birth, lowly of station, he healed without medicine, fee or reward)
II 373 S.S. fol. Bristol 1814

The marvellous, strange and superstitious are well represented. The particular account of the singular and melancholy death of Peter Hodway, farmer at Hemlock, Nr Wellington, Somerset, whose wife wished he might break his neck before he returned home, which happened accordingly (S.S. fol. Bristol 182-) is one of several which imply the folly of tempting providence.

Signs and portents appear in such descriptions as the wonderful sight which appeared in the heavens, and which was visible for at least an hour on Mendip Hill like an army of men in black uniform rushing forward to battle (SS fol. Bristol 182-).

There are numerous accounts of cruel stepmothers, fathers or aunts turning their children out of doors to perish in the cold, or more actively in the case of two unfortunate orphan children who were burnt to death in a lime-kiln at Baston, Somersetshire, by their unnatural mother-in-law (S.S. fol. Bristol 182-).

Most of the foregoing appear tc have been inspired by actual events, however embroidered and moralising the treatment, but a few recall the unlikely marvels which Autolycus carried in his pack, as, for example, the account of a woman gardener of Radstock, Nr Bath who was delivered of a monster.

Most of the broadsheets catalogued by Green appear to date from the 1820's and 1830's, and many contain ingredients which we associate with the popular press which increasingly took their place. Occasionally, much later in the century, a particularly sensational event, usually a murder, would stimulate the publication of a broadsheet which could be on the streets far more quickly than a newspaper. A broadsheet published at Bath in 1881 gives details of the trial, sentence and full confession of P.M.Lefroy for a murder on the Brighton

railway, together with three woodcuts.

A notable difference between Bristol printers and those in Somerset towns like Taunton and Bruton is that the former seemed to concentrate on news items which presumably would have a quick sale, whereas the country printers continue publishing chapbook material, traditional tales, homilies for recalcitrant children (thinly disguised versions of Dr. Faustus, for example), and somewhat implausible accounts like that of the Reverend John Miller, minister of the town of Bath, who remained in a trance for four days and nights, together with mysterious sights witnessed and prophecies that are to take place (SS. 4^to (184-)) until well into the 19th century.

Many broadsheets inhabit a twilight world of half-fact, half-fiction, and their illustrations, usually well-used woodcuts prepared for purposes other than the one in hand, were symbolic rather than representational. Clearly, though, the demand for these was high, and a printing run for a sensational murder could rise to nearly 2 million, a figure claimed for James Catnach's several "execution papers" relating to the Greenacre-Gale murder case 1836-37. Broadsides issued in connection with two other murder cases in 1848-49 by James Rush are both estimated to have numbered 2,500,000[73].

Serialisations of sensational stories by Reynolds and Lloyd were the natural successors of Catnach and the printers of the Seven Dials, and catered for similar tastes: violence, mystery, crime, passion were their stock in trade, but there were other ingredients as well. In Reynolds' tales, particularly those of the Mysteries of the Court of London, there is a strong element of radical contempt: the aristocracy is lashed for the twofold enjoyment of Chartist readers, who could enjoy the details of apparently authentic revelations of immorality in high places and at the same time justify their Republican leanings. The emotional ambiguity and the genre are still very evident.

Lloyd considered the readership of his publications so different in education and social position from the readers of the three-volume novels that he and his editors sometimes distrusted their own judgement and placed the manuscript in the hands of an "illiterate person - a servant or machine boy for instance. If they pronounce favourably upon it, we think it will do."[74] Leaving aside the patronising tone which can be noted in the private utterances of many popular publishers concerning their audiences, and the ungenerous connotation given to 'illiterate', it is worth considering the statement. Our analysis of various tales by Reynolds shows a considerably greater vocabulary difficulty than might be expected, and readability tests often show Reynolds to be marginally more difficult than Dickens. It is true that much of this vocabulary is repetitive and the polysyllables are usually concentrated in adjectives and adverbs: the optional elements, from a weak reader's point of view. But we should not underestimate the difficulty they may have presented. Unfortunately in his detailed and absorbing analysis of this genre, Louis James has not been able to give a clear picture of the occupational status of readers of so-called 'penny-dreadfuls', though he cites the young Rossetti reading 'Ada the Betrayed' while workmen in coffee houses read Blackwood's[75], as an example of the blurring of class distinctions by this kind of literature.

The West Country evidence concerning its impact is slight, but tends to be negative. W.E.Adams, considered earlier, was attracted by the striking illustrations of Reynolds' Miscellany, but could not afford to buy his own copy: he indicates that few of his contemporaries were better off, either financially or educationally. An article published in the 'Bristol Examiner' in 1850 describes an encounter with a bookseller in the out-parish of SS. Philip and Jacob who planned to go further west "into a reading neighbourhood" which, it seemed, this was not. The writer suspects that the reason for his failure may have been lack of pence among the population or perhaps that the bookseller had inaccurately gauged the taste of the neighbourhood, "if they had any"[76]. He gives a list of the titles on offer and they included:

'Mysteries of the Court of London'; 'Paul Clifford or Hurrah for the Road!'; 'Claude Duval the dashing highwayman'; 'The Wolf and the Black Forest, or the mysterious Murder', etc.

There were some works of non-fiction at a penny each including: 'Medical Receipts' and a 'Household Guide'.

From the Statistical Society's survey ten years before this and from other sources described earlier, we know something of the state of literacy of this parish, and it is interesting to see this contemporary assessment of its apparent indifference to this kind of literature. An important factor must have been price: but another factor, we suggest, may have been the difficulty of the language.

CHAPTER V (v)

Popular literature of West of England provenance: The Tewkesbury Tales and Cheap Repository Tracts

Consideration of a group of chapbooks printed in Tewkesbury c. 1760

Few workers in this field would deny that chapbooks formed part, if not whole, - apart from the Bible and its derivatives - of the reading material of the marginally literate at least until 1800, and probably some time thereafter. Victor Neuberg[77] has made out a substantial case for chapbooks being a guide to the culture of the poor; the repository of their folk-tales, oral tradition, histories, and escapist fantasies. As he has pointed out, it is a somewhat neglected field, perhaps partly due to the scarcity of the material and partly to its unrewarding nature, at least from a literary point of view. However, as an indication of the social constraints which it implied, it provides valuable insight into popular culture which was often at variance with the mainstream of thought in the second half of the eighteenth century. An important, and, as far as can be ascertained, academically unconsidered, collection was produced by Samuel Harward, a printer and publisher who began business in Tewkesbury and later developed branches in Gloucester and Cheltenham. Harward sold books at all levels of the social spectrum and later had a highly successful bookshop and lending library at Cheltenham.

What we have called The Tewkesbury Tales first achieved some celebrity as the result of the high prices which some of them realised at the sale of a Mr. Haslewood's library in 1833.

> "At the dispersal of the library which was sold in London, by Evans, in 1833, these productions of 'the Tewkesbury Tank' were knocked down, after a severe competition, to Thomas Thorpe the eminent metropolitan bibliopolist, at a price 'far beyond their intrinsic value'. This event created a 'rage' for these 'chap-books' or 'patters' and as it was found impossible to procure a perfect set, it has been thought well to preserve as complete a catalogue of them as is attainable, for the benefit of the members of some future 'Roxburghe Club'." 78

Gloucestershire Notes and Queries[79] gives 88 titles of chapbooks and similar publications published approximately between 1760 and 1775 and comments that as Mr. Haslewood managed

> "with all his acknowledged zeal and perserverance to secure only about half of them, it is almost hopeless to expect a complete collection will ever be obtained."

N & Q were probably correct, but the Gloucester City Collection possesses 11 and the Harding Collection recently gifted to the Bodleian contains a further 38 different titles. No doubt there are others elsewhere, but this seems a reasonable number to analyse with some profit, because we can assert with some justification that these would have formed some of the reading of those living in areas of up to 20 miles from their distribution points in Tewkesbury, Gloucester and Cheltenham, in other words the majority of Gloucestershire for at least two decades towards the end of the 18th century. As a result of other recent work we know what the 'literacy' figures were for these areas at this time. In addition, by applying modern readability tests to this material we can reason that, as a result of their relative simplicity in terms of syllabic and syntactical structure, they would have been accessible to most adults who had crossed the threshold of reading attainment.

Some of the Tewkesbury Tales contain conventional material, some suitable for children; but the majority of the tales are bawdy in content and brutal in execution. The Collection held in Gloucester bear comments penned in a careful hand, probably dating from c. 1840, which give the writer's opinions succinctly: "this is indecent","v.indelicate"; "strange incest"; "against hasty and secret marriages", etc.

In analysing these chapbooks we originally attempted to apply the methods devised by Vladimir Propp in Morphology of the Russian Folk-Tale. Unfortunately, although the schema of introductory situations and denouements is frequently similar, the central sections do not fall easily into recognisable patterns. As Propp's schema does, perfectly, fit Celtic and English fairy tales we can at least suggest that chapbooks are mainly of a different order, and are more akin to Elizabethan drama with its mixture of 'bold bawdry and bloody manslaughter' than to fairy tales, though there are some clear exceptions.

The titles of the tales, with reference numbers, are as follows:

(see attached list on following page please)

Tewkesbury Chapbooks

From the Harding Collection (Bodleian) and the Gloucestershire Collection

1. The Beautiful Shepherdess of Arcadia
2. Bite Upon Bite
3. Blind Beggar of Bethnal Green
4. The Bristol Bridegroom etc.
5. The Crafty Miller, or Mistaken Bachelor
6. The Cruel Cooper of Ratcliff
7. The Faithless Captain, or the Betrayed Virgin
8. (Omitted)
9. The Honour of a London 'Prentice
10. (Omitted)
11. The Kentish Tragedy - a Warning Piece to all Perjured Young Men
12. The Low Country Soldier Turned Burgomaster
13. The Loyal Lovers of Exeter
14. The Loyal Lovers, or Carmarthen Tragedy
15. The Northamptonshire Tragedy
16. The Northern Lord
17. The Oxford Tragedy, or Virgin's Advice
18. The Seaman of Dover
19. Sweet William of Dover
20. The Unfortunate Concubine, or Rosamund's Overthrow
21. The Unfortunate Lovers, or John True and Susan Mead
22. The Virtuous Wife of Bristol
23. The Wandering Young Gentlewoman, or Catskin in Five Parts
24. The Wandering Shepherdess
25. The Bristol Garland
26. Country John's Unfortunate Ramble to London
27. The Doting Mother's Garland
28. The French Convert
29. The Guernsey Garland
30. Love in a Barn
31. The Mistaken Lady's Garland
32. The Squire of St. James
33. The Strand Garland
34. The Suffolk Comedy
35. The Tragicall Ballad of the Nobleman's Cruelty to his Son.

There is a preoccupation with certain themes and motifs and these make a useful starting point in the examination.

In the 33 tales examined, no fewer than 13 are concerned with loss of virginity or sexual relations achieved by force, fraud or a cash arrangement. In the majority of these the surrender of virginity (frequently on the eve of marriage) results in disaster for the deceived girl. The seducer's reaction is usually to break off the marriage on the grounds that the girl is a whore and her child a bastard; summarised in T15:

"No more thy face I'll see, no more send to me,
I will not own a bastard or a whore."

In some cases, as in this, the feelings of the self-righteous seducer are sufficiently violent to provoke murder. Occasionally the girl kills her betrayer. This tale in this and other ways is reminiscent of "Tess of the D'Urbervilles", though the moral is by no means the liberal one presented by Hardy. The unequivocal message is that virginity is a precious commodity and should not be sacrificed without substantial reward - either marriage or riches: preferably both. In some tales an astute girl manages to gain these social and financial rewards without actually sacrificing her 'jewel'; usually by some form of trickery. In T17 a girl agrees with her aristocratic would-be seducer to meet in a barn, but she plies him with drink and has him stripped by a band of gypsies and sent home with a gypsy child on his back. Surprisingly the duped lord approves the girl's integrity and ingenuity and marries her. Although there are manifest intended comic elements in this tale, it now has the flat effect of a child's comic paper.

Married women are also subject to improper advances in these tales. The Crafty Miller , T5, tells of the offer of an entire mill by a bachelor landlord for a night with the Miller's wife. By a trick reminiscent of Boccaccio (the bond is made out as 'for the use of my she ass' - with obvious consequences) the Miller and his wife gain mill and their ass is provided with a handsome

night-gown, without loss on their part. In the somewhat unsavoury Bite upon Bite, T2, another astute country girl names her bastard child 'Maidenhead' and goes to London to sell it. Again, she obtains jewels and wealth by the original loss and her subsequent sale of her 'Maidenhead'. In T31 a maid loses her virginity to a squire on promise of marriage, after which he reneges on the agreement. However, by using a strategy similar to the deception practised in Measure for Measure she is successfully married to the squire, who subsequently approves of the trick. These deceptions are usually practised at the expense of the great or wealthy, a theme which deserves further consideration.

Most of the tales have as their starting point the love of a wealthy man for a poor girl (13 tales) or the reverse (9 tales). 7 tales concern personages of equal status. Clearly, many come into the category of wish-fulfilment fantasies and suggest the possibilities open to a handsome young country-person provided he or she keeps his wits about him and is not gulled.

Marriage in many tales is seen in strongly mercenary terms. Parents with heirs or heiresses will go to extreme ends to prevent their children marrying beneath them, or, if married, to punish the transgressor. Stratagems include announcing that the child is dead, sending son to sea, daughter into country or disowning son. These disabilities are usually overcome by luck or fortune: the sons sent to sea often win a fortune either in prize-money or by rapidly amassing wealth in a foreign land; the daughters sent away into the country frequently return to town in male disguise and pursue their ends in that fashion (cf. 'The Recruiting Officer' and other Restoration comedies.) The disowned sons usually find gold or become wealthy in some way, enabling them to win the original bride and also obtain power over their parents. This is usually exercised mercifully: forgiveness of domineering parents is a prominent element in these tales.

An often-repeated moral, particularly in the tales which end in death for either or both lovers, is the evil of parting lovers, a sentiment summed up in T13:

"You covetous parents, wherever you be,
Consider the same, and now lament with me;
Let not gold or silver true lovers divide,
Lest dreadful examples do to you betide."

However, some of the tales take a rather different line. T33 concerns a Merchant's daughter to whom marriage is proposed by a Duke. The girl is already secretly married to her father's apprentice and subsequently the daughter is disowned and the apprentice dismissed. After various vicissitudes the daughter is restored to wealth and her parents, but the moral is clear:

"For her sake young people may well be content,
In that thing call'd marriage, when friends consent,
Such things done in private great honour blast,
And instead of joy bring destruction at last."

Although much of the substance of these tales concerns the trials of true love, achieving happiness or tragedy at the end, there is little evidence of concern or interest on the part of the writers in the workings of marriage or of domestic life. There are exceptions, one being T32 in which the squire's wife is distressed because she remains childless. She consults a herb-woman who suggests that the fault may lie in the husband. She proposes to supply a substitute, a sprightly young country fellow who for board and lodging and 10 gns a night does the husband's offices while the latter lies drugged in bed. The resulting infant is, as the midwife and the husband declare, as 'like him as e'er he can stare'. Young children are scarcely ever mentioned, but unwanted babies or bastards are fairly frequent. In none of these tales is any of these aborted or killed, but a callous attitude often prevails.

The tales make little concession to older people of either sex who have a 'Coltish Tooth'. The old miser, T2, the Mistaken Bachelor, T5, who have amorous or lecherous leanings are the subjects of tricks leaving them financially dunned and sexually frustrated. The widowed mother in T27 is unwilling to allow her daughter to marry as she will lose the greater part of her fortune as a dowry; she accordingly makes her forgo marriage to her sailor-suitor until she has married. The daughter is sent to Worcestershire but returns disguised as a

young beau. She proceeds to woo her own mother and this 'indelicate' tale is more specific than most: at one juncture the daughter, dressed as a man:

"Gave her many kisses and set her on her knees
And with her ancient bubbies did play a comedy."

They go through a ceremony of marriage and the fortune becomes the daughter's husband's. The true facts are revealed and after the mother has verified the fact:

"But to be farther satisfied I solemnly do swear,
Soon will I have the breeches down and see what sort of ware"

she admits defeat. However, she is to have £100 a year and will be caressed when it comes to her turn.

In these tales love is mainly a matter for the young, and the elderly or deprived are usually thwarted or tricked in its pursuit. Deviance is rare: the crypto sado-masochism which flourishes in the works of Reynolds and others half a century later finds no pre-echo here. There is certainly a plenitude of disaster and death, but the descriptions are generalised and do not have the circumstantial precision of descriptions of burking etc. to be found in The Mysteries of London. There is much male impersonation by females. but with the exception of T27 described above it is not overtly sexual. There are no examples of male-female impersonation nor is any element of strong male friendship evident. Incest occurs in one tale, T29. A nobleman widower loves his pretty 15-year old daughter and persuades her to sleep with him. She becomes pregnant and is despatched with £40 to Guernsey. When the child is born it carries on its chest the legend 'I am thy son and brother too.' Later the girl leaves the child in care, goes to London and marries the son of a goldsmith. Later her son (unrevealed to her) obtains an apprenticeship with the same goldsmith. At length the latter dies; his widow marries his apprentice (her son) and in the morning after the bridal night sees the inscription on his chest. She goes into a decline and dies after two months. The double incest is not presented salaciously; indeed the phraseology of

the tales never approaches the intimate particularity of Chaucer or Donne. Usually the authors employ euphemisms such as: 'thus the traitor had his lustful will'; 'in his lower tier some courage did feel'; 'he took her by her middle so small'; 'he laid her on the plain/ After he had got his will of her he took her up again.'

There is little hint of tenderness of any kind between lovers and many of the tales are concerned with two themes: that a girl is worthless once she has lost her virginity (even to a king, T20), and that lovers must honour their marriage vows. Recent studies by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population have suggested that a high proportion of girls in 18th/19th century England were pregnant at the time of their marriage, so this recurrent theme may reflect this. It is interesting that in such areas the Tewkesbury Tales and Hannah More's Cheap Repository Tracts express the same codes, though the former were written with a profit-motive. It is difficult to know whether these anonymous authors were unconsciously reflecting the prevailing mores of the poor, perpetuating ancient taboos or genuinely trying to influence the social structure of the age.

In this social area the tales reflect F.R.Leavis's view that formula literature tends to be reactionary, but in the area of social mobility this is not always the case. Hannah More's writings constantly reiterated the virtue of the poor knowing and accepting their place, while urging the entrepreneurial classes not to abuse theirs. It is true that in some of her tales she implies or openly states that aristocrats can be wicked, but the criticism is no invitation to action on the part of the deprived. Conversely, in the Tewkesbury collection a constant theme is the upward social progression of men or women by physical charm, wit or luck. In no case is social elevation the result of industry or endeavour: they are by no means precursors of Samuel Smiles, but the publishers of the collection evidently recognised the existence of a fundamental desire for advancement. Admittedly, social success does not always lead to happiness: in at least

one tale the elevation results in disaster, but even here one feels that the story-teller does not write with the intent of keeping the lowly low; it is merely that fate, and fate plays a greater role in these tales than Providence, is always double-sided. However, there are some elements Hannah More would probably have approved, apart from those already considered concerning pre-marital intercourse. One of these is a small but interesting degree of patriotism: interesting when compared with the burgeoning of this sentiment in popular songs and street ballads in the following century. In T16 for example the German Emperor welcomes the knight and his wife because they come from Britain, 'that blest land of fame'. In T9 the London Prentice, having killed two lions by pulling out their hearts, declares: 'This have I done/ For lovely England's sake.' Another element which is interesting seen against the background of urban development, particularly London, is the warning, implicit and sometimes explicit, of the dangers lurking in cities for unwary country fellows. T26 contains the most clearly defined message; Country John's 'Unfortunate Ramble to London' carries various disasters such as robbery, deception and being left to deal with a demanding and noisy bastard child. Eventually John leaves London wealthier than on arrival, but the moral is clear:

> "You young men that live in the country sweet
> I'd have you to please your old masters,
> And never go up to the city for fear
> You meet with such like disasters:
> For London's as sharp as the edge of a knife,
> The city is fill'd with faction and strife,
> Boys, nothing so sweet as a country life,
> Let those who want go to London."

Another factor in the social underpinning of these tales is the theme of the humble gaining the upper hand at the expense of the rich or powerful, either as the result of superior wit or skilful deployment of their physical resources. This is particularly manifest in T2, 5, 19, 30, 31. With few exceptions the countryman is presented as a resourceful and courageous individual ready to face difficulties on land or sea. Several tales which involve a financial

success story have a motif of the ex-sailor challenging a noble suitor to a 'coin-dropping contest', the brashness of which may jar on the modern ear.

There are stereotypes of attitude as there are stereotypes of names: Betty, John and William being the most common of the latter. Girls react predictably to noble suitors: their state is too humble or their accomplishments too few.

> "'Then Gaffer', said the Country Girl,
> Yet something I have to say,
> Among the ladies I cannot dance,
> Except it be the hay.'
> 'But thou canst dance in bed, my dear,
> And that's the prettiest sport.'"

Conventionally also they die easily of broken hearts, although apparently otherwise in good health. Disease is rarely mentioned, nor are domestic necessities or problems. The stories have much more in common with Chaucer from whom parts are sometimes derived, rather than Langland who evidently knew what it was to live in an insanitary cottage with a leaking roof. There is a strong element of escapism, though the aspirations are bourgeois ones. This is emphasised by the constant reference to exact sums of money, either as dowries, settlements, annual incomes, seduction fees or commercial coups.

Stylistically, there is little of note. Occasionally a couplet strikes one as rather effective. At the close of the Northamptonshire Tragedy (T15) a father tries to save his daughter who has been condemned to hang after shooting her unfaithful lover:

> She was condemn'd to die, her father's gold did fly,
> Like chaff before the wind his child to save.

and in T22 'A harlot's love is like the wind.'

Religion is rarely mentioned: ministers occasionally appear on cue to marry or hear a distracted murderer's confession, and in T2 the local parson is mildly satirised. Protestantism is assumed, and in T24 the Wandering Shepherdess is protected by a Huguenot couple. In the French Convert (T28) two Jesuits are pilloried by the author; he shows them plotting to defile their lord's wife and afterwards planning to obtain pardon from the Pope. Their plots are thwarted by the Protestant gardener, who saves his lady and

converts her to the true religion at the same time. This is, perhaps, the most 'Gothic' of the tales and comes close to the tortuous plots of Reynolds and Lloyd. Its bigotry is crude and coarse, but it assumes a total acceptance on the part of the audience.

Surprisingly, there is little of the supernatural. In T17, 20, 35 there are some supernatural phenomena: mainly apparitions, magic trees etc. appearing to reveal a murder or the site of a grave. As with Chaucer the moral 'murder will out' is strongly endorsed, and in an under-policed land the storyteller, perhaps, was obliged to employ such devices or make his murderer confess and be hanged or highlight his guilt by going mad and hanging himself.

Some ancient customs are mentioned in the tales; in T11, 13 couples break a gold ring or coin between them as a pledge of their faith. The childless woman in T32 visits a herb woman, the midwives in T35 refuse to deliver the woman in labour until they learn the father's name. On the whole, though, they are not a particularly rich hunting ground for the folklorist, as Ruth Firor has shown Hardy to be.

There is little intentional humour. Certain lines echo the ribaldry of Chaucer; in T12 in a situation analogous to the bedroom scene in the Miller's Tale, the Soldier-turned-Burgomaster declares:

> But 'tis in vain, I will arise
> And dash the piss-pot in his eyes.

But the contextual management is not skilfully executed and the lines are coarse rather than comic.

It is apparent that these tales are comparatively harmless. We have seen that there are a number of elements running strongly against the 'desirable' characteristics which the working classes should possess. Perhaps the most important of these is the frequently implicit suggestion that social mobility for men and women is a real possibility, by whatever means, and though it appealed, possibly, to the 'pools' mentality rather than the Samuel Smiles ethic, it is at least arguable that this kind of reading material, possibly

the only reading material, outside Holy Writ, of the marginally literate, did something to create a social irritant even if it did little to satisfy it.

Cheap Repository Tracts

Cheap Repository Tracts

Hannah More's intentions in turning her hand to a less sophisticated literary sphere than her successful dramatic works were clear and have been outlined in an earlier section.

With a few exceptions, the standard of presentation of the Cheap Repository Tracts is far higher than contemporary commercial chapbook material which they intended to supplant. The quality and accuracy of print indicate that Hannah More took care to choose printers whose resources and skills were considerably greater than those of chapbook producers generally. With the exception of the incorrect use of 'it's' for 'its' (and that may have been the fault of the copy rather than the compositor) there are very few errors.

The quality of illustration, also, is noticeable. For the most part the tracts have a single illustration on the first page and these are usually an accurate reflection of the content. In a very few examples the same block is used more than once, but even here there is concern for relevance. Many of the woodcuts are by an engraver named Lee and contain considerable detail and depth. They are of an altogether higher order than most of the chapbook and broadsheet material available at the end of the 18th century.

Superior in draughtsmanship, they nevertheless use many of the ingredients by which chapbook illustrators increased their sales. For example a high proportion have a gibbet somewhere in the picture. In tales which have an element of disaster or impending disaster at some stage: shipwreck, riots, death by hanging, plague, murder or lightning, it is these items which are selected for illustration. Others, though less dramatic, are sufficiently intriguing for a hesitant purchaser or reader to discover the contents for himself. The illustration for Parley the Porter is a case in point: it shows a man pouring wine into a cup held through the grille of a castle door; behind him, out of his sight, are several others with drawn cutlasses.

Though there is a relative uniformity of quality and presentation, stylistically there are considerable variations: often within the work of the same author. Pieces by Hannah More and her sisters are usually indicated by an initial; Z is Hannah herself. Many of the pieces are anonymous, and, as some of these are more sophisticated than the general level of the tracts, it is reasonable to suppose that they were the products of some of the distinguished members of the More coterie. Others, like the Account of the Plague, are shortened transcriptions of well-known works, carefully edited to present a strongly moralistic message.

At one end of the spectrum one may find a style of exposition which is analogous to the ballad style used by Wordsworth and Coleridge in their Lyrical Ballads, pursuing their intentions of writing in the language really used by men.

> He plied the loom with good success,
> His wages still were high;
> Twice what the village lab'rer gains,
> His master did supply.
> From The Gin Shop, or A Peep into Prison.)

At times the simplicity verges on the banal, as in 'The Loyal Sailor', though in mitigation it should be remembered that the lines were intended to be sung.

> Some raised the power
> Were flogged next hour,
> All which was vastly funny;
> And some, they say,
> To mend their pay,
> Subscribed away their money.

Apart from their stylistic qualities, lines like these raise important questions of intention: was this seriously intended to counteract mutinous tendencies among sailors, or to comfort those who had most to lose from labour conflicts ?

Two of the tracts which are alleged to have had widespread success in stemming the tide of riot and discontent contain lines of similar banality to those quoted. For example in 'Half a loaf's better than no bread', we have:

The gentlefolks too will afford us supplies;
They'll subscribe and give up their puddings and pies.
Derrydown.

and ending:

Quoth Tom, 'Thou art right; I rise, I'm a Turk,'
So he threw down his pitchfork and went to his work.

However, sections like these, though representative, are not the entire impression given by a reading of a selection of the C R tracts. At times, particularly in dialogue, there is a vigour and life which still retains a certain power. In ''Tis All For the Best', for example, we have this exchange between Mr. Simpson, who does clerical work for a farmer, and the Farmer himself. Mr. Simpson declines to work on the Sabbath as a result of strong religious convictions:

'Sir,' said Mr. Simpson, 'I have a Father in heaven Whom I dare not disobey.'
'Then let Him find employment for you,' cried the enraged farmer.

This is by Hannah More herself, and in addition to the skill of writing convincing dialogue, she added that of successful pastiche. In Parley the Porter she catches the flavour of 'Pilgrim's Progress':

Parley: O that the keepers of all other castles would learn from my ruin, that he who allows himself to go to the very bounds, will soon jump over the hedge; that he who talks out of the window with the enemy will soon open the door to him; that he who holds out his hand for the cup of sinful flattery, loses all power of resisting.

Although it is unashamed in its moralistic message, More and, to a smaller degree, her sisters, had a sure hand in wrapping therapeutic religion in palatable tales of convenient length. Many of these have the qualities of good parable: that of being succinct and memorable. One thinks particularly of 'The Old Man and the Bundle of Sticks' (which may owe something to a traditional folk-tale); 'Turn the Carpet, or The Two Weavers'; 'The Lady and the Pye, or Know Thyself'. The first of these is an exemplary tale to show the value of a strongly united family: individuals, whether people or sticks, are vulnerable and fragile, but a bundle of sticks is virtually unbreakable. The two weavers work, similarly, by analogy, or, some would say, syllogism. The two carpet-weavers are debating the providence of the Almighty, which one of the two doubts.

The other gives the example of the carpet which is woven wrong side facing the weavers: in the course of the work it appears to be rough, knotted and without pattern; however, on completion and turning right way up, it shows its logic, pattern and perfection.

A logician would have little difficulty in uncovering the speciousness of these arguments, but the fact remains that they are simple and memorable. They would not necessarily have converted the infidel, but they might well have given usable arguments to the converted who wished to justify their stance.

Stylistically and structurally these are suited to the target group of 'middle and lower classes' for whom the tracts were designed.

For the most part, realism is not a feature of these works: occasionally there may be a recognition that life in a cottage is not the idyll suggested by Wordsworth, but the distinctions are not so much between the destitute and those living in reasonable comfort as between the good managers and the feckless. An example taken from 'Sorrowful Sam':

> "When Mr. Stephens peeped into the house it stunk so with filth; it shocked him to think how people could consent to live like pigs, rather than take the smallest pains to keep themselves fresh and clean, for though folks may be ever so poor, 'tis nothing but their own laziness need keep them dirty."

Occasionally realism breaks in with what may seem to the modern reader unusual and perhaps uncalculated vividness. This from an account of the wreck of H.M.S. Centaur and the privations of those adrift in an open boat:

> "Some complained of the same symptoms in their throats, some had drunk their own urine, and all but the Captain had drunk salt water."

Presumably this is an adaptation of a contemporary account which is included in order to show the power and ways of Providence. It may illustrate something of the variety of these tracts, a quality which was probably as much the consequence of multiple sources and contributors as a clear editorial policy.

Finally, in considering the style of the tracts, we have an example of the sophisticated, abstract and urbane which has more in common with the

accepted canon of 18th century poetry than the world of chapbook literature. This is from a series of verses entitled "The Bad Bargain".

> But mark again, you lass-a-spinning;
> See how the tempter is beginning:
> Some Buck presents a top-knot nice,
> She grants her virtue as the price;
> Yields to the Beau so smart and civil;
> Her soul she renders to the devil.

and ends:

> Be wise then, oh, ye worldly tribe,
> Nor sell your conscience for a Bribe;
> When Satan tempts you to begin,
> Resist him, and refuse to Sin;
> Bad is their bargain, on the whole,
> Who gain a world and lose a soul.

This item is unsigned, but it might easily be an anonymous contribution by a poet of the calibre of Cowper. Despite its skilful and urbane handling of its theme, it lacks the directness and immediacy which the home-grown varieties of C R tracts usually possess. This contribution, almost aloof in its detachment, probably brought the author admiration from the More coterie, but may have had little impact on the normal target group for her tales.

In analysing in more detail some 35 tracts in the possession of Bristol City Library, we shall be attempting to consider three broad areas: for whom they were intended, what principal themes were emphasised, and what attitudes towards their readers were actually or implicitly expressed.

Many of the tracts are explicitly addressed to what Hannah More would probably have considered to be the middle classes of society: farmers, millers, vote-holders, those who attended horse-races and those engaged in commerce. Clearly, readership is not confined to these groups and the object lessons which are given in "The Honest Miller" and "The Roguish Miller" are applicable to all who are in a position to benefit themselves by defrauding others. However, though dishonesty is not confined to any one stratum of society, fraud was less likely to be perpetrated by the labouring classes, for lack of

opportunity, if nothing else. If we are to assume, for a moment, a readership among the poor, then the interesting point made by M.G.Jones is particularly relevant here. Though Hannah More had no sympathy with revolution of any kind she had made a revolution in thought when in her tracts she 'let the poor know that the rich have faults.'[80]

Many of the tracts are addressed to the extremists in any stratum of society: in religion, politics, the self-indulgent, or any perpetrators of the common vices, either for their direct conversion to moderation or temperance, or perhaps more plausibly, to reinforce a moral fabric which might guide or sustain those who were potential rather than actual transgressors.

This is done in a variety of ways and with various degrees of severity. For the gravest sins against society, the threat of the gibbet, pictorially and in the narrative, is frequently present. The apparently natural progression from comparatively venial sins like drinking, through a gamut of crimes leading to the scaffold, is subsumed in tales like 'Sinful Sally' (CRT 1), 'The Gin Shop' (CRT 3), the histories of highwaymen, murderers and others. Although the tracts are careful to point out more than once that redemption is always possible at any stage in the progression:

> None who lives is quite undone;
> Still a Ray of Hope I'll cherish
> 'Till Eternity's begun
> (Story of Sinful Sally)

its concomitants, confession and salvation, do not preclude execution - if the criminal has reached the appropriate stage. So, logically, reformation begins in childhood and the dismal ends of highwaymen are invoked to teach parents their duties in demanding adherence to a strict moral code. Failure to do so may not only produce a candidate for the gallows but, as in the Execution of Wild Robert, a curse for the mother for her failure to teach morality or a decent trade:

Blame not the law which dooms your son,
Compared with you 'tis mild;
'Tis you have sentenc'd me to death,
To Hell hath doomed your child.

Where the law is somewhat less stringent, the narrative often provides sanctions which are equally effective: racegoers are killed or maimed when the stand collapses (CRT 4), an ungrateful child is struck by lightning (CRT 2), a dishonest servant who takes the witness of heaven is struck dead (CRT 34), and murders and murderers are revealed in various miraculous ways. Perhaps following the axiom that a high probability of detection is the best deterrent, the tracts show that all sin or crime is likely to be revealed. Where disaster might be inappropriately severe, the tracts show that cheats or frauds do not prosper, but earn disrepute and ostracism from their contemporaries, and conversely, public-spirited servants like the honest miller of Gloucester (CRT 6) or the Hackney Coachman (CRT 8) benefit morally and financially.

Although the sanctions of a severe, if just, Providence are usually explicit, many of the tracts attempt to advance reasons or explanations. This is particularly so in the many which attempt to stem discontent and rebelliousness. Use is often made of analogy in order to explain or justify the ways of Providence to man. The idea that, though at present confused, God's plan will ultimately be clear, is expounded in 'Turn the Carpet'. Similarly, in 'The Two Gardeners', in which one questions the wisdom of the Almighty Who assigned the acorn to the great oak tree and the gourd to a small ground plant (CRT 27). A few acorns shaken on to his head by a breeze change his opinion.

There is an element of scorn at the expense of the discontented in some of the tracts, and this is contrasted with the dogged determination of those who will labour on in the trust that the Almighty will provide.

And though I've no money and tho' I've no lands,
I've a head on my shoulders, and a pair of good hands
So I'll work the whole day, and on Sundays I'll seek
At Church how to bear all the wants of the week.

With hindsight one may detect an element of the simple trust of the proletariat which Orwell presented with a mixture of irony and pathos in 'Animal Farm'.

Other qualities which the tracts attempt to instill are duty and respect to parents. In a particularly melodramatic tale Tom Watson, after a life of debauchery and callousness, is finally struck dead by lightning and his epitaph emphasises the moral:

> Here, by red lightning, struck to earth,
> The bold blasphemer lies;
> That mother smote, who gave him birth,
> And on her grave he dies.

Although negroes are assumed to be a lesser breed, where they appear in the tracts, they are given dignity and used as exempla of a species who, though (presumably) inferior to the least of the readership, may as the result of their Christian beliefs show deeds of charity surpassing those of their white counterparts. In the tale of Babay, a negress brings up a white baby, cures him of yaws and sets him on the way to prosperity. At her death, in gratitude for his upbringing, he pays for an expensive funeral and a sermon (CRT 18).

Another tract has a negro prince as its hero: despite his proud bearing

> "no sooner is Christianity placed before him, than he is struck with its truth and beauty, and embraces it with a childlike simplicity."

The reader is exhorted to

> "be humble and willing to learn like Prince Naimbanna. Read, like him, the sacred Scriptures, with reverence and with prayer to God for His blessing." (CRT 19)

Only one of the tracts is specifically designed to diminish cruelty to animals. In this a ploughboy who is unnecessarily harsh in his treatment of his team of horses is visited in a dream by an angel who tells him that there is One "who knows his sins full well".

Although the implausibility of this is mitigated by its dream context, the fictional nature of the majority of these moralities is indubitable. One wonders how Hannah More and her collaborators could reconcile their

use of fiction and the supernatural bordering on superstition with their expressed intention of dealing with pure truth.

An early edition of the works of Hannah More has an extract from Burke as a preface:

> "Religion is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue."

And this is a principle upon which the C R tracts are firmly based. Virtue is not the prerogative of the powerful: in fact, in most of the tales, the converse is true. On the other hand, material gain, with a few exceptions where it is linked with honest dealing, cannot be achieved without endangering the structure of society. It was this, in particular, which the C R tracts emphasised, mainly because this was the immediate threat. The tracts, by assertion and illustrative fiction, may have linked indisputably in the minds of their readers the forces of morality and religion. It was the powerful association of these which Cobbett tried to break in his attack on Hannah More a quarter of a century later.

> "She had taught piety and contentment to the poor; and had made one the cause of religion and defence of the established order." 81

It is claimed that Cobbett's Monthly Religious Tracts, which set out to dissociate order and religion in 1821, indicate a measure of Hannah More's success.

Interestingly the strong vein of common sense and reasonableness which we may associate with Cobbett is frequently to be found in Hannah More's tales. Just as Cobbett in one of his articles concerning cottage economy showed the advantages of brewing home beer rather than tea, so More shows the advantage of drinking at home rather than in the local beerhouse.

> "Insomuch that by not drinking the earnings of a week in an evening at the public house, they were soon enabled to brew a cask of good beer at home." 82

Similarly, one feels that her attitude towards the upbringing of children has a determined practicality which Cobbett would not have disowned, judging from the events of his own childhood which he selected as examples. He would have parted company with her, no doubt, in the doctrinal basis for her beliefs.

The following may illustrate these:

> "Many a poor fellow has come to the gallows by his mother's folly: we are all corrupt by nature, and therefore if our faults are not corrected in our infancy how can we hope to obtain favour of the Almighty when we come to riper years." 83

Although More's immediate purpose in writing or persuading others to contribute to the Cheap Repository Tales was to counter revolutionary and infidel publications there are indications that she had thought, in some depth, of the causes of revolutionary tendencies. So, although, on the one hand, revolutionary statements are parodied, ridiculed and demolished with some facility, this is a relatively small element in the whole fabric of the tales. Although there are some contemporary accounts which suggest almost miraculous effects of some of them, it is unlikely that More herself would have made extensive claims for their efficacy as immediate antidotes. Arguably, what they did do was to give respectability to the inaction of a considerable number of citizens who may have had cause to make representations for better working and living conditions, but who did not.

The majority of her tales are concerned with reinforcing the elements of society which she considered underpinned its stability and order. The first of these is religion and this pervades most of what she writes. At one level it could certainly be described as a social opiate because it reinforces, in many tales, the necessity of trusting in an all-merciful Providence which, however bleak or inscrutable it might seem to the individual, would ultimately, in this or the next world, reveal a glorious pattern and purpose. The calm confidence of those who subscribe to this doctrine is often contrasted with the querulous uncertainty of those who do not, and a prime example of this is ''Tis All for the Best'. This is a most implausible series of disasters which are accepted by Mrs. Simpson, the inmate of an Almshouse. The course of Providence is marked by various quasi-miraculous occurrences, for example the cottage from which she and her husband were ejected was struck by lightning the same night and burnt to the ground. Years later, after the death of her

husband, the uncharitable farmer who maltreated them dies, racked by conscience especially over his treatment of the Simpsons. Accordingly, he leaves Mrs. Simpson £500 in his will.

Though implausible and almost ludicrously moralistic this is a readable, entertaining and memorable tale. As implausible but less memorable is an account, supposed to have been written on a tombstone, of a wife who buried both of her children in one day and who, from that time, became a very devout Christian. This is accompanied by an address suitable for those who may be attending a funeral.

'Patient Joe or the Newcastle Collier' is another example of the genre. Patient Joe accepts all that happens as the providence of God and humbly submits to it. On one occasion a dog stole his meat and when he ran after the animal his fellow colliers jeered at him, then went down the mine for their shift. When Joe returned from the pursuit he learned that the pit had caved in.

> "In trouble he bow'd him to God's Holy will;
> How contented was Joseph when matters went ill!
> When rich and when poor he alike understood
> That all things together were working for good."

For those who think that God's apparent sanctification of the hierarchical composition of society is entirely to the disadvantage of the poor, More makes it clear at various points that the wealthy and great have problems as well. The landowner in 'Sorrowful Sam' is a man of sorrows who states,

> "Do you show me a miserable poor man, and I'll show you ten miserable rich ones."

Similarly the story of King Dionysius and Squire Damocles is retold, partly to emphasise the transience of life for rich and poor alike, partly to introduce a sober note at feasts and merry-makings.

> Come let this aweful truth
> In all your minds be stor'd;
> That DEATH o'er every youth
> Hangs like a pointed sword.

However, acceptance of Providence should not be regarded as an excuse for fatalistic inaction. More shows that poverty can be mitigated by hard work, cleanliness and the right attitude of mind. She is also careful to show that the moral code of established religion should be binding on all classes, and there is an underlying implication that dishonesty in its various guises and at various class strata undermines the social contract. Consequently a large number of tales exemplify the dangers of sharp practice which frequently bring disaster to the practitioner. Among the lower orders: 'The Hampshire Tragedy' shows how a maid robbed her master and when she denied the theft and called down vengeance from heaven if she lied was immediately struck dead. The behaviour of two millers is contrasted in 'The Honest Miller of Gloucestershire' and 'The Roguish Miller - or nothing got by cheating'. The latter is a homily to millers to take moderate toll:

> "And when to your Maker you give up your soul
> You'll rejoice that you always took moderate toll."

The former refers to the severe winter of 1795 and to a miller whose stream did not freeze, unlike most others. When he was prevailed upon to take advantage of this financially he refused on the grounds:

> My river flows when others freeze,
> But 'tis at His command;
> For rich and poor I'll grind alike,
> No bribe shall stain my hand.

These and many other tales appear to be directed/at or intended for self-employed tradesmen or artisans; nearly all are about persons engaged in such occupations, as opposed to general or agricultural labourers. "The Election - A Quite New Song" is an indictment of certain electioneering practices, particularly the dispensation of quantities of free alcohol:

> And though I'm not objector
> To drinking when you're dry
> Yet methinks a drunken elector
> Might as well be a pig in a sty.

The intended readership is not necessarily confined to vote-holders, but there is a strong implication that it was this limited section of the populace who were being primarily addressed here.

To a large extent the morality which Hannah More sought to champion, insofar

as this can be adduced from the tales, was firmly based on that of the Ten Commandments. However, she concentrates on those areas concerned with dishonesty, envy, honouring parents and murder rather more than those concerned with sexual immorality. An exception is a well-presented but fairly conventional 'Harlot's Progress' called Sinful Sally, who after seduction by a local landowner and dismissal as his mistress turns prostitute and drunkard. However, despite her degradation she throws herself on her Saviour's mercy:

> Thou canst save the vilest harlot
> Grace, I've heard, is free and full
> Sins that once were "red as scarlet"
> Thou canst make as "white as wool."
>
> Saviour! hear me or I perish!
> None who lives is quite undone;
> Still a Ray of Hope I'll cherish
> 'Till Eternity's begun.

Either More did not regard sexual promiscuity as a serious threat to social order or she felt that this was an indelicate subject to dwell upon. She is less inhibited about murder and execution. As noted earlier, many of the illustrations show gibbets either in foreground or background and one must presume that these were included as a means of luring purchasers or readers. Her broadsheet 'The Execution of Maclean' known as 'the Gentleman Highwayman', illustrated with a picture of a gaol with a gibbet outside, is mainly concerned with conversations with Maclean before his execution rather than details of his adventures. Maclean, it seems, was the son of a clergyman and is presented as tearful and repentant: the glamour of his occupation is played down, whereas the religious implications of his repentance are emphasised.

One feels that the sensational aspects of the tales and broadsheets are lures to tempt reluctant readers: it is unlikely that More thought that many of her intended readers were potential highwaymen or murderers. But the pervasive spirit of these tales, as noted earlier, is that crime and sin

would be ultimately revealed. Not only is morality prescribed but a built-in inspection system is adumbrated in addition.

CHAPTER V (vi)

DISSEMINATION - Distribution

Dissemination

The dissemination of reading material for the working people followed various routes according to its nature: material published for profit following established trade routes: improving tracts following a more personal network usually linked to Church or Chapel.

One of the earliest routes may be found in the Chapman and Traveller's Almanac of 1711[84]. This describes the post roads, with branches and distances, marts, fairs and markets in England and Wales

> "alphabetically disposed; so that the place where and the days on which any of them are kept is immediately found out."

The two roads of particular interest are the Middle West Road and the West Road. These are as follows:-

The Middle West Road

From London to Gloucester to Pembrook 228 miles

To	Hounslow	10		
||	Maydenhead	16	||	Bristol Road
	Nettlebed	12		
*	Abbington	16	*	Oxford
	Lechlead	20		
	Cirencester	10		
	Gloucester	18		
	Monmouth	20		
	Uske	8		
	Cardiffe	10		
	Swansey	30		Haverford
	Carmarthen	20		Cardigan
+	Pembroke	30	+	St. David's

The West Road

From London to Plymouth 201 miles

To	Stanes	16		
*	Hartford br	16	*	Portsmouth
	Basingstoke	9		
	Andover	18	+	Poole
	Salisbury	16		Dorchester
+	Shaftesbury	19		Weymouth
‖	Sherborne	16	‖	Taunton
	Crookthorne	13		Bridgwater
	Honington	19		Mynehead
*	Exeter	15	*	Barnstaple
+	Ashburton	20		Bideford
‖	Plymouth	24	+	Totnes
				Dartmouth
			‖	to all Parts of Cornwall

It is likely that these routes were already old by 1711 and continued to be used by chapmen and travellers well into the 18th century.

However, various entrepreneurs had set up presses in the West Country and, apart from the numerous provincial newspapers, there were printer/stationers who catered for what they considered to be the various needs of their potential customers, including chapbooks and ballads. Consequently the long radii originating at London were intersected by numerous smaller networks based on the cities of Bristol and Gloucester but also on smaller towns such as Tewkesbury, Cheltenham and Banbury. The latter, though in Oxfordshire and outside our immediate area, contained, and contains, one of the oldest provincial printers, Cheney & Co., whose publications found their way to neighbouring parts of Gloucestershire, particularly Stow-on-the-Wold.

This firm, despite successive rebuildings, has retained a number of the original chapbooks, mainly unfolded proofs, many of which are the only extant copies. Several, with Cheney's name upon the title page, show co-operation with other county printers and leave doubtful the actual origin of the books[85].

Although the production of chapbooks leaves no trace in the account books after 1774, it is probable that it was important for at least the first 20 years of the 19th century[86].

One account book covering the years 1766-73 shows quantities of ballads sold to clients at Aylesbury, Deddington, Winslow, Warwick, Coventry and Stow-on-the-Wold, giving an early example of a radial pattern of distribution of a small provincial printer[87].

In Bristol by 1847 there were 30 printers listed and although many of these were printer-stationers, local collections show that Bristol printers had been publishing for at least two centuries considerable quantities of political and religious pamphlets.

Traces of more ephemeral literature intended for entertainment rather than erudition are more difficult to find. There is a reference to John Morgan, a Bristol printer working in 1830, of whom it was noted "The Morgan Broadside has 21 different faces."

In the Harding Collection of chapbooks and ballads in the Bodleian there are few originating from Bristol; of those which do there is Clouter, Printer (Travellers Wharehouse) No. 13 Castle St. Bristol, who published a street-ballad entitled "I wish I had never lov'd no one at all." Also Collard, W., of Bridewell Lane and Hotwell Road, Bristol, whose street ballads included "A new Song on the late battle fought by the Bristol Hero Neat (Now Champion of England) and the Gaslight Man." Also Thomas Stevens Storer. No. 4 Narrow Wine Street, Bristol, "The Liverpool Tragedy" (Harding Collection).

Also working in the first half of the 19th century in Bristol were the firms of Storer, Printer, 128 Temple St. (Street Ballads); Watson, St. James Churchyard (Street Ballads) and W. Marshall, Bookseller and Street Ballads, Bristol.

The last-named had links with J.Catnach of Seven Dials, as may be seen in a description of the Funeral Procession of R H The Duke of York in 1827: printed and sold by J. Catnach, 2, Monmouth Ct, 7 Dials. Sold by W.Marshall, Bristol[88]. This appears to have been printed before the funeral as the arrangements are stated but not the actual event.

Catnach's connection with Bristol is referred to in Charles Hindley's biography. When trade was quiet in the 'sensationals' Catnach would get his men working on the small histories, some of which he considered particularly suitable for certain localities.

> "Early one Monday morning, an Alnwick friend called to see him. They were in the act of conversing together when the principal pressmen came to enquire what work should next be proceeded with. He was told to go on with some of the old traders, and that on a certain shelf in the workshop he would find 'Jack, the Giant Killer' and 'The Babes in the Wood', and not far from there there were 'Blue Beard' and 'Tom Hickathrift', and lying between them was 'Crazy Jane', 'The Scarlet Whore of Babylon', 'Nancy Dawson', and 'Jane Shore'. 'These,' added Jemmy slyly, 'will do for the Bristol trade.' 89

Undoubtedly, this connection would have been used to disseminate some of Catnach's more remarkable publishing feats: for example William Corder's last dying speech and confession, whose sale was estimated at 1,166,000 copies[90].

Vendors of street literature were active in Bristol in the first half of the 19th century and probably shared many of the characteristics of their London counterparts, described in detail by Thomas Wright and Henry Mayhew[91]. It is clear, from a contemporary account, that some areas of Bristol, including the parish of SS. Philip and Jacob, were particularly unprofitable.

In Gloucestershire there were several printers in the latter part of the

18th century supplying a similar market to that tapped by J.Catnach. Perhaps the most important of these were S.Gamidge and S.Harward. Although the former operated from Worcester, outlets for their publications included S.Harward's in Tewkesbury. Mr. Jeffries in Stow-on-the-Wold, and others in Taunton, Bewdley, Mortimer, Cleobury and numerous other towns in Worcestershire[92].

Many of the songs and chapbooks published by Gamidge are duplicated by S.Harward, a slight difference being that the former seemed to reject the bawdier ballads.

Samuel Harward, bookseller and printer in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, from 1760 to 1809 is said to have kept five shops (at least one of which was a circulating library in Cheltenham) and left considerable property and a valuable collection of books[93]. During a period approximately

1770-1780 Samuel Harward published a number of chapbooks which, for convenience, we may call the Tewkesbury Tales; these have been considered elsewhere. Apart from Tewkesbury, we know that Harward's publications were distributed from Gloucester and Cheltenham and probably reached much of the county of Gloucestershire and parts of Bristol.

Gloucestershire had other booksellers and printers engaged in this level of publication, including Rudder, Stevens (Cirencester), Pytt, Raikes, Washbourn (Gloucester), and Bence (Wotton-under-Edge)[94].

Although the system of distribution of chapbooks and street ballads is by no means as clear as G.A.Cranfield has made that of the provincial newspaper, it is possible to see, in this period, at least three channels of dissemination. First, the itinerant bookseller making extensive excursions from a London base; second, publishers such as J.Catnach supplying quantities of topical and traditional material for provincial booksellers and warehouses which would be sold wholesale to chapmen and hawkers, and, thirdly, the provincial publishers with various outlets, either their own shops or those

of trading associates, where, again, material would be sold to wholesale or retail customers. In addition to these, throughout the 18th century an elaborate system of newspaper distribution was developed; in addition to papers newsboys were expected to collect advertisements and also to carry books, patent medicines and other goods sold by the printers[95].

We have, then, a pattern of radii, some following, perhaps, late mediaeval routes, overlaid with an 18th century spider's web pattern, to use Cranfield's phrase, radiating 20-40 miles from urban centres.

R.M.Wiles and G.A.Cranfield have charted in considerable detail the distribution patterns of the provincial newspaper in general and Bristol and Gloucestershire journals in particular. The former shows that No. 160 of the Gloucester Journal (24 April 1725) was distributed via 13 divisions, encompassing the counties of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Somerset, Monmouthshire, Glamorganshire, Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Brecknockshire, Warwickshire, Oxfordshire, and Berkshire and a total of 121 cities and towns[96].

Although the geographical coverage seems considerable, numerically the sphere of influence may have been small. Cranfield estimates that several of the papers in the Western Provinces before 1750 had circulations of hundreds rather than thousands. Additionally, although the Worcester Journal announced its intention "to do justice to all persons of all conditions and taste", the contents, style and typography were designed for the minority: "the worthy Body of Merchants and citizens", "the clergy, Gentry, Farmers etc." or "the Gentlemen, Tradesmen and others", of various advertisements and handbills[97].

CHAPTER V (vi)

DISSEMINATION - LIBRARIES

Dissemination - Libraries, Booksellers etc. in the West of England

Various towns and cities in the West Country, particularly those which as spas or commercial centres, like Cheltenham, Bath and Bristol, had a cosmopolitan flavour, provided libraries for at least some of their citizens at a comparatively early date. Bath and Bristol had subscription libraries by 1750, and some indication of their size may be gauged from a copy in the Bodleian of a catalogue of 'near 10,000 volumes; being part of the stock of William Frederick, Bookseller in Bath 1774.'[98] Michael Sadleir considered that the novel section of this catalogue consisted of titles of the kind described by Lydia Languish[99]. A list of subscribers to Marshall's Library, Bath, 1793-9, is the only 18th century list known to survive. This consists of a list of names but without, unfortunately, addresses or means of identifying which books they borrowed. One popular belief, and the butt of some 18th century satire, that women predominated among readers, is not substantiated by this list, in which male subscribers numbered twice as many as female[100]. The cost of subscription 1750-1760 was between 10/6 and £1 per year. Newspapers, also, were read by subscription, as is indicated by an advertisement of Bigge of Bristol. In 1794 he opened a reading room for the perusal of newspapers and pamphlets up to 2/- a week in value. His charge was a guinea a year, the same as the subscription to a complete circulating library. Apparently, the plan was popular largely owing to "the present important crisis"[101].

An important advantage of the subscription library was that it was possible to read relatively recent publications: Joseph Edmond of Bristol, for example, advertised in Felix Farley's Journal (1791) a collection of several hundred volumes of new novels which "are lent to read by the year, quarter, month or single volume".

Despite some contemporary suggestions that the "lower orders" enjoyed these facilities; in 'The Two Wealthy Farmers', for example, some dialogue runs:

> "Why our Jack the plowboy spends half his time in going to a shop in the market town, where they let out books to read with marble covers" [102]

there is little evidence to suggest that the clientele of circulating libraries and subscription reading rooms were any but those enjoying more than average leisure and income. The intention in 'The Wealthy Farmers' is satirical, in any case, it should be remembered.

Interestingly enough, attempts to implement the 1850 Libraries Act produced acrimonious debate in Bath in the 1860's concerning the proposed 1½d rate. Those in opposition claimed that the classes who would most benefit from the library would be those who could afford to buy books for themselves. Countering this, it was claimed that this had not been the case in other towns nor had it proved so in Bath where of 1,574 readers in one year, there were 59 labourers, 42 domestic servants, 85 students, 30 lodging house keepers, 55 grocers and grocers' assistants[103]. R.D.Altick gives some indication of use of Bristol libraries by occupational groups for a later point in the century.

Bristol Library: Issue figures by occupational groups 1891

Number of Books Issued to:	Read on Premises	Taken Home
Apprentices	576	554
Artisans	2,792	2,354
Assistants	1,108	3,567
Clerks	1,055	2,553
Employers	399	778
Errand boys	604	253
Labourers	692	210
No occupation: male	1,017	621
female	502	10,476
Professionals	409	1,183
Schoolboys	6,313	6,904
Students	1,371	1,273

(104)

This may be compared with a similar categorisation of registrations from two public libraries in Manchester a generation earlier.

Manchester Public Library: 1857-58: Registrations	Branch A	Branch B
Artisans and mechanics	250	536
Artists, designers, draftsmen	10	5
Clergymen, surgeons, other professions	11	4
Clerks, salesmen, commercial travelers	121	123
Errand and office boys	74	54
Laborers, porters, etc.	29	79
Merchants, agents, etc.	8	9
Milliners	10	0
No calling	9	0
Policemen, tax collectors	11	26
Schoolpupils	97	18
Schoolmasters and teachers	15	16
Shopkeepers and assistants	45	130
Spinners, weavers, dyers, other factory workers	68	238
Warehousemen, packers, etc.	104	180
"Entirely undescribed" (i.e., women and children)	82	621

(105)

A striking figure contained in the Bristol statistics is the 10,476 books loaned to female borrowers for reading at home. Almost as substantial is the number of books read on and off the premises by schoolboys. A less obvious but equally important figure is the low incidence of reading by those designated labourers and this is true of the figures for Manchester Public Library.

It should be noted that in the 19th century active library borrowers constituted a mere 3% - 8% of the total population[106] and of those borrowers those designated labourers account for between 3.2% and 4.2% of the total[107]. So, small as the commitment to library use was in the latter part of the 19th century, the response of labouring groups was minute.

It would seem that the majority of users of public libraries in the second part of the 19th century belonged to artisan groups, school children and women. Labouring groups, who even in cities formed a large proportion of the working population, were disproportionately represented in loan figures. As a contemporary wrote somewhat severely at the end of the century,

> "In spite of modern civilization and modern education, working men, but especially working women have as much use for learning as a cow has for clogs." 108

Lack of opportunity (and Altick suggests that little encouragement was given to such sections of the population to patronise libraries), long and tiring working hours, and it must be suggested, an education which, even if it had imparted a thin veneer of literacy, had done little to stimulate a need for books either as recreational or informational resources, all contributed to this result. It would appear that the disparity between labouring groups and artisans regarding literacy which has been described and analysed in earlier chapters may be seen to be perpetuated in terms of provision and response to that provision later in the century.

A broad conclusion which emerges from commentaries on the 19th century is that despite the remarkable increase in the output of the presses and

the increased accessibility of books either for buying or borrowing, the main beneficiaries were artisan groups and their affiliants; large sections of labouring groups remained largely untouched except where they had no choice (for example in purchasing goods which were wrapped or packaged, increasingly, in paper with skilful steel engravings on a variety of educational topics: the Bristol Zoo series, for example, produced in the latter part of the century by E.A.Robinson & Co. of Bristol.)

Altick has suggested that for those living in rural areas it was not until the cheap periodical press made efficient use of railway transportation and rural education received a needed impetus from the Forster Act of 1870 that the majority of country-dwellers acquired much interest in reading[109].

Our figures for Gloucestershire show that large numbers of labourers and their wives had reached some measurable standard of literacy appreciably before this time. However, although the faculty might exist, opportunity for reading and, more important, material which was accessible in physical, human and linguistic terms was frequently not.

Saint Mary's Tully Nov. 20th 1798.

Dear Father & mother

It is a long time since I have heard from you therefore I take this opportunity of sending these few lines hoping you are both well as I am at this time, not being properly settled made me neglect in not writing to you. Indeed we are not properly settled now, as our Lieut the Commanding officer departed this life. Last night after a long illness which he bore with patience, and resignation. I hope you are all well My Brothers & Sisters. Give my love to them we expect to be from here very soon as we must have another Lieut in our old ones room we have been here ever since the 25th of August last and when we return I will send you some Money I received a small trifle of money therefore I could not send you any as being in want of Cloths &c Remember me to all my absent and enquiring friend and Duty to your self & mother and Remain your Dutiful Son

Please Send me an answer by return of Post if the Post Charge you more than one Penny for the Letter you must return the Back and they will return you the

Samuel Jeffryes
Board H. M. S. Brig
Stanley

CHAPTER V (vii)

NAVAL LETTERS: 1798-1811

This small collection of letters, transcripts of which form Appendix B, is part of a collection of SS. Philip and Jacob records now in the Diocesan Archives. The letters had apparently been lodged with the incumbent at that time, the Reverend William Day. It is not clear why he retained them, though as some of the letters concern financial affairs they were probably taken to him for advice or, in some instances, an affidavit in order to substantiate a claim for half-pay or a deceased sailor's belongings. It is also probable that some recipients who were unable to read handwriting with confidence took them to him and left them there.

Apart from those letters attached to the collection from or to the Admiralty, we know little of the writers of the letters except that all but one was a seaman. We do not know if they had all voluntarily enlisted or whether some had been conscripted. Few complain of the conditions they served under, though there is a phrase in letter 4 which suggests the bleakness of life at sea: "for a man of war is a miserable place." All the letters are addressed to places within the parish of SS. Philip and Jacob or just outside it. A few are addressed to the house of the addressee but the majority to shops or other persons living near easily identified buildings. It is conceivable that some of the letters were unclaimed and had been taken to the incumbent for that reason.

Some of the letters can be fairly confidently identified as being autographs, others have internal evidence which makes it clear that they have been written by another. For the majority it is difficult to assign authorship, though recurrent phrases and certain stereotyped stylistic devices suggest, if not an amanuensis, at least a cooperative enterprise. As these are not legal documents sailors do not use a mark even if the letter was not written by themselves. Frequently the quality of the handwriting suggests extensive practice or great care or both.

The sample is too small and our knowledge of the group too slender for one to claim any representative value; however inasmuch as this is a homogeneous group and comes from a known area, it is of interest to consider for what purposes and with what success these sailors used the written word.

One of the features already referred to is the quality of the handwriting, which is generally good. Occasionally the conjunction of more than usually odd spelling and cramped writing makes words or phrases indecipherable, but this is rare. The spelling varies a good deal, as can be seen from the transcriptions, which retain the spelling of the originals. There is little which results in total confusion and the main difficulties are place names. Some of the letters are almost entirely accurate from this viewpoint and letter 8 is notable. An interesting feature of the spelling is that it often preserves the Bristol/Somerset dialect, which does not appear to have altered appreciably. This is true also of some of the syntax: examples are: 'I ham'; 'to have whent'; 'fery careful'; 'I attended him regular'; 'I ad not'.

Most of the letters are written to father and mother, though after the ascription remarks are usually addressed solely to the mother: sometimes as a series of repeated 'dear mother' at the beginning of new sections. This may be an indication that the letters were taken down from dictation or some kind of simple rhetorical convention. All the seamen's letters are almost entirely without punctuation and though in the transcriptions gaps have been left where it is assumed there is an end of sentence, there is no such gap in the originals.

The purpose of many of the letters is to preserve communication and links with home, give information, and, very frequently, to explain or try to resolve financial problems. Frequently the anxiety to hear from home is expressed. In letter 1 the writer tells his sister that he has written three times but had no reply. There are several attempts to explain the franking

system to avoid paying twice, as in letter 2:

> "If the post office charge you more than one penny for the letter you must return the Back and they will return you the overcharge."

Although the physical problems of communication are often implicit there are indications, also, that the postal service could be quite rapid. The writer of letter 11 tells his wife that her letter was

> 'only nine days from Bristol to me and I hope this will Not longer from me to you.'

In letter 1 a sailor attempts to give brotherly advice to his sister at a distance and warns her particularly of the dangers of rash liaisons:

> "but sister if you are aney ways given to a partner be fery carefull of these kind of people ... with out you have perfectley well acquainted with his temper and behaviour for it will be to late when you have had maney connections together."

The writer makes his point and so do the majority of those who try to unravel the complexities of pay, money orders, and entitlements, though with what success in Bristol is not known. Probably, as suggested before, it was for elucidation that they were taken to Mr. Day. Letter 3 is an example of this, though less clear than some:

> "the money that I put in the Post office the last Letter I receifed From you You said that you did not receifed the money that was put in the post office for you after you went away I received a Note from the Post office to certefy that you Received the Money the 25. so I would wish to know Whether you Received the money or Not the reason that I did not wright Was I did Not make answer to the last Letter Because I was satisfied to think that you had got the money after you geting home."

Expression and presentation are poorer here than in some of the letters and in a postscript the writer says, "The next letter you send have it wrote plain." Though not articulated in any of the other letters this must have been a problem for those who were not familiar with reading handwriting as a regular activity.

Letter 7 also suggests by implication the difficulties of arranging financial affairs at a distance. In this case it is the cousin of the dead sailor who is writing:

> "if you cannot come down yourself Please to send down my wife with a Certificate from the Churchwarden & a note from you to say that you Empowerd my wife to Recive the money for you and then I will gett the money for you every penny and Endeavour to gett the wages that is due to him besides the money Deposited in a gentlemans hands in this Ship So I hope you will come yourself or Else send my Wife as Quick as possible as the sooner you come the better"

This letter is signed by John Vinor and it is directed to be left at Mrs. Hungerford's near the Rose and Crown. Three months later he has the 'malencholy news' to inform her that her son, having been ill for some time, has died. 'I as a frend and townsman had thought it proper to lett you know it.' After condolences: ''tis a debt we must all pay either sooner or later', he informs her of her son's financial position and the steps she must take to get what is due to her.

It would seem that this seaman, apart from his moderate ability as a penman, has a fairly shrewd knowledge of the workings of the naval system. These letters and others indicate that men from the same district were often kept together: there are a number of references to friends on board who send their good wishes - or news from them to be forwarded as in letter 13, "let Samuel Smith's brother know he is still on Board with me and well."

Apart from the social advantages of such an arrangement these networks may have been supportive to communication more generally. This is an important factor in understanding the organisation of an area such as SS. Philip and Jacob, which, superficially at least, remained an area of deprivation long into the 19th century.

The letters have considerable stylistic variations. Many are close to speech and this probably reflects their dictation or method of composition. Occasionally this gives a vivid directness as in the following extract from a sailor to his mother:

> "dear mother I am the Gunners servant and he is a good kind of a man and that makes my situation better than it would be for a man of war is a miserable place but I hope I shall be clear before long and be at home with you again"

Much of the phraseology, particularly the ascriptions and subscriptions, are rather stereotyped, and it would appear that there were formulae for communicating the news of death and sending condolences, for example, as in letter 12:

> "I conclude with being a partner of your grief for the loss of a good Comarade on my side and an affectionate husband on yours."

However, in the following letter there is no cliche to mask what with 20th century sensitivity we might consider tactless:

> "he is to be intered ashore on the Rock of Giberalter as we lie in the Harbour of that Place in my opinion the Sea Fareing did not agree with his Health."

Letter 8 probably shows the greatest skill in composition even though the style is somewaht florid:

> "I assure you that nothing would give me more pleasure than to hear from you at all times and it would give me much more satisfaction to have the Pleasure of Enjoying your Company at home."

Despite the fluency, though, James Taunton only uses punctuation twice in his letter.

One of the most interesting letters in the collection is no. 17 from a prisoner of war in a camp at Cambrai. He has time on his hands and has been learning to write:

> "I hope dear father you will excuse my scribble for this time but I hope dear father I shall be able to write the next one better for I shall do my best for to learn."

It is a long letter and far from being a scribble, the calligraphy is good. The construction improves as the letter continues; there are some muddled passages earlier. Later, however, there is some rather dignified expression with faint Biblical undertones.

> "first dear father I shall not have the opportunity of writing to you much longer by what I can learn if you find that you do not hear from me you must not Give me up for lost for we Cannot do as we Like in such a place as this."

It is unlikely that mechanical and structural skills like these were actually learned in the P.O.W. camp, but were, arguably, built on to the foundation of a formal education.

In conclusion, there are some general points to be made. The first is that all of these letters show some competence and are able to communicate effectively a range of information and supportive advice and comfort. Even so, the spectrum of skill is considerable, and it is a salutary reminder that "the ability to write a letter" covered a wide range of skill even in a relatively homogeneous group like this. How widely this skill was shared among seamen generally at this time, and how many of these letters were dictated, is impossible to estimate. All that can reasonably be inferred is that there were sufficient seamen able to exercise these skills to enable a network of communication to operate.

CHAPTER V (viii)

The use of readability formulae in assessing levels of difficulty of 18th and 19th century printed and manuscript materials

The dissertation has attempted to estimate the literacy of working people by analysis of signatures, collateral sources and anecdotal and descriptive ones. Considerable problems remain, the most fundamental of which seems to be whether it is possible to define more clearly what a reasonable competence in reading meant and what that enabled the possessor of this skill to tackle.

In recent years considerable interest has been shown by educationalists and publishers and also those concerned with the dissemination of information in the problems of matching comprehensibility of the text to its intended readership[110]. Basically this means the readiness with which a potential reader selects a text and his subsequent willingness to turn the page. This may be affected by various factors: graphic design, lay-out of text and its subject matter. However, once selected the difficulty of the text is the main factor which determines how quickly, if at all, it will be rejected. In a study made for the United States Armed Forces Institute in an attempt to identify and analyse the high proportion of students who began but did not complete its correspondence courses, study guides and textbooks were analysed using the Flesch Reading Ease Formula. A high correlation was found between readability scores and the probability of students finishing the course; that is to say the easier the text the less the likelihood of premature retirement from the course.

In considering the dissemination and penetration of literature for the people, it seemed frequently the case that contemporary commentators were often aware that printed material was too difficult for its intended readership: this was particularly true of much which was published by the S.D.U.K. Consequently I experimented using various readability tests in analysing some 18th and 19th

century material. Early attempts showed that there was a wide variation in the difficulty of material intended for a general audience. Clearly, modern readability tests indicate the difficulty a modern reader would find but Jack Gilliland of Durham University has stated that the following statement would be legitimate:

> "If this text were to be utilised today then a reader would require a reading age of approximately x years if he is to cope satisfactorily with the material."

Alan Stokes has pointed out the danger of attempting to relate the scores to norms, either grades or reading ages, and consequently they will be presented only as scores which give some indication of the nature of the material on an ease of reading scale.

Varicus caveats are necessary, the first being that devisers of readability formulae do not make extravagant claims for their work: they are useful guides rather than infallible criteria.

It is important, also, to realise that considerable variations of difficulty can take place within texts as well as between them.

Quite apart from these limitations which affect their modern application, there are others which limit the credibility of their retrospective use. In order to reduce these Dr. Frayling suggested another method of tackling the problem, namely by devising a noun-frequency test based on 18th or 19th century vocabulary derived from contemporary literature. Jack Gilliland considered this an ingenious idea,but one which would require considerable resources in terms of computer programming. Apart from those difficulties, Alan Stokes named asscciated methodological problems, particularly that of sampling.

Another possibility which has been discussed is to build up a profile of the lexical net available to certain peer groups. Material for this might include trade manuals germane to discrete artisan groups, though there would again be problems in identifying works which were in fact read. This could

be linked to a noun frequency measure constructed from the written as opposed to the printed remains of particular groups. This would ensure the identification of vocabulary used by the individuals concerned. The problem here would be in collecting sufficient material from a geographical area where some knowledge of levels of literacy exists.

It may be that further studies in the history of English literacy will confirm what gradually appears to be emerging, namely a cohesion between certain artisan groups throughout the country. If this were established, at least for a number of counties, then it would be possible to analyse in terms of readability all printed and manuscript materials relating to a particular trade, for example, carpentry, including trade manuals, specifications, business and personal letters for a defined period, say 1830-1850. Arguably, by establishing securely the general skills of literacy of one group, statements concerning the historical literacy of working men would have at least one reference point.

However, this study is limited to demonstrating the range of reading difficulty of some of the material which was available to a general readership at various points in the 18th and 19th centuries and drawing some tentative conclusions.

The readability test which I used was the Flesch Reading Ease Index. This test has been extensively validated by pooled 'expert' judgments and it agrees substantially with all well-known readability formulae. The formula involves taking a passage of 100 words and counting the number of syllables and the average sentence length. These can then be compared with the Flesch matrix and a reading difficulty figure obtained. Fewer syllables and a greater number of sentences are likely to indicate greater ease of reading. The scale is as follows:-

Easy	80-89
Fairly easy	70-79
Standard	60-69
Fairly difficult	51-59
Difficult	30-50
Very difficult	0-29

One of the principal purposes of primary education of all classes in Protestant England was to enable them to read the Bible. It was the wish of George III that all of his subjects should be able to read the Scriptures for themselves and this gave a push to elementary education in reading comparable to that of other Protestant countries of Europe.

Our first readability analysis, therefore, concerns the Bible. Three passages from Genesis give a Flesch figure of 82 which indicates that at a surface level we have material in the category 'easy'. An identical figure is obtained for three passages from St. Matthew. Although conceptually the material of both may be considerably greater than its technical difficulty, it is apparent that at a surface level the material would be reasonably accessible to someone who had passed the threshold of literacy. In many communities, also, early aural familiarity with the Bible would have assisted the process.

The language of the Epistles is more difficult and this reflects the difference between abstract reasoning and doctrinal argument on the one hand and narrative on the other. The former demands a greater proportion of Latinate and therefore polysyllabic vocabulary. Three passages from the Epistle to the Corinthians produce an average figure of 79 which puts them in the category, nevertheless, of 'fairly easy'.

'Pilgrim's Progress', one of the most popular derivatives of the Bible, shows at 72 a greater difficulty than might be expected. This is mainly because the length of sentences is often considerable. The vocabulary, particularly the choice of nouns, has a high proportion of monosyllables, as an examination of the first 30 nouns in a randomly chosen passage shows.

cross - treasures - King - glory - life - father - mother - wife - children - brethren - sisters - disciple - man - death - truth - doctrine - feet - way - ministration - person - burden - ease - name - bondage - mystery - head - works - law - deeds - alien.

A production by Hannah More which is stylistically indebted to Pilgrim's Progress, namely 'Parley the Porter', produces a Flesch figure of 68: a rating of standard difficulty. We shall return to her Cheap Repository Tracts and other publications later.

The extensive writings of John Wesley are of interest in considering readability. He was prolific in supplying material for the education and edification of his own sectarians and many others besides. He appears to have recognised, possibly instinctively, possibly as a consequence of preaching to widely varying audiences, the need to modify vocabulary and structure for different contexts. For example, "A Treatise on Justification" rates at 41, which is 'difficult', and "The Character of a Methodist" at 52, 'moderately difficult'. "Primitive Physic", probably the most widely sold of his publications, rates at 60, that is of standard readability, though there are considerable variations within the text, the introduction being particularly difficult, the prescriptions less so. Presumably its purchasers would have been more interested in the latter than the former. In Wesley's "Introduction to the New Testament with Explanatory Notes" he clearly states his intentions as a disseminator:

> "I write chiefly for plain unlettered men who understand only their mother tongue and yet reverence and love the word of God, and have a desire to save their souls."

Some of Wesley's abridged versions of well-known secular works have been mentioned earlier, as have, at the other end of the spectrum, the large number of tracts addressed to various actual and potential malefactors. The readability levels of these are of interest: 'A word to a Swearer' (85); 'A word to a Smuggler' (81); 'A word to a Drunkard' (88). These are all within the category 'easy' and suggest as adumbrated earlier that Wesley

had a shrewd estimate of the capabilities of his intended readership. "Directions to Children", two versions at 64 and 59 respectively and "Directions to Servants" at 55 would appear to be quite demanding.

Hannah More was originally a teacher by calling and a communicator by inclination. Her belief in the power of the printed word was considerable and although the effect of her own writings is probably impossible to gauge, there is little doubt that she took considerable care to give the Cheap Repository Tracts the best chance of reaching her intended public and being read by them. The majority of the tracts described earlier are in ballad style verse and this is not legitimately assessable by the Flesch Readability measure. The prose examples show a fairly consistent level of difficulty:

The Thunderstorm	57
'Tis All for the Best	65
Parley the Porter	68
Sorrowful Sam	67
The Two Shoemakers	69
Tom White the Postboy	60
The History of Hester Wilmot	74
The Grand Assize	58
Black Giles the Poacher	57
The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain	53

With the exception of 'The History of Hester Wilmot', the remainder are in the range fairly difficult - standard. The greater difficulty occurs when the content is principally conjecture and polemic rather than narrative. It should also be noted that difficulty rating is increased by the length of sentences, a feature which is illustrated by the following passage from 'The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain' which, it is reasonable to infer, also represents the views of the authoress concerning comprehensibility of text, though here in an oral setting.

> "The Shepherd, who took it for granted that Mr. Johnson was gone to the parsonage, walked home with his wife and children, and was beginning in his usual way to catechise and instruct his family, when Mr. Johnson came in, and insisted that the Shepherd should go on with his instructions just as if he were not there. This gentleman, who was very desirous of

being useful to his own servants and workmen in the way of religious instruction, was sometimes sorry to find that though he took a good deal of pains, they now and then did not quite understand him; for though his meaning was very good, his language was not always very plain; and though the things he said were not hard to be understood, yet the words were, especially to such as were very ignorant. And he now began to find out that if people were ever so wise and good, yet if they had not a simple, agreeable and familiar way of expressing themselves, some of their plain hearers would not be much the better for them. For this reason he was not above listening to the plain, humble way in which this honest man taught his family; for though he knew that he himself had many advantages over the Shepherd, had more learning, and could teach him many things, yet he was not too proud to learn even of so poor a man, in any point where he thought the Shepherd might have the advantage of him."

Two lists of thirty nouns taken consecutively from 'Parley the Porter' (prose) and one of the most famous of the Cheap Repository Tracts, 'The Riot, or Half a Loaf is better than no Bread' (verse) give a clear indication of the relative simplicity of the latter.

Parley: houses - attack - repair - country - sons - violence - servants - princes - words - truth - book - laws - manner - vigilance - time - happiness - thing - exertions - absence - master - wilderness - peace - security - temptations - power - difficulties - helps - comforts - service - arms.

The Riot: neighbours - riot - lads - mills - meat - sport - justice - law - pitchfork - blunder - boy - passion - reason - bread - butchers - diet - disturbance - tap - distresses - God - times - land - grain - harvest - crops - breeze - corn - seas - tea - prices.

Other, genuine, chapbook material such as the Tewkesbury Tales is in ballad style verse and cannot properly be tested using the Flesch measures, but if we were judging them on vocabulary alone they would average 75, that is within the category 'fairly easy'. Not all chapbook material is linguistically simple: 'Guy of Warwick', for example, which had a long history of popularity, has a readability figure of 56, fairly difficult.

Before leaving the 18th and earlier centuries we should consider the difficulty of Tom Paine's works. His 'Common Sense' scores 61 but 'The Rights of Man' has a readability level of 47, that is, difficult. As has been said before, the dissemination and penetration of this work is hedged about with a good deal of myth and even sensationalism but it is interesting to note that the surface difficulty is considerable and would have required

much higher reading skills than any of the works mentioned so far, apart from Wesley's 'Treatise on Justification'. Certainly it is incautious for writers to assume that anyone who could cope with chapbooks, tracts and Holy Writ would have been able to read 'The Rights of Man' with ease. The position is exemplified by Victor Neuberg[111]:

> "Small wonder, then, that the factory operative who could read might turn more eagerly to a paper-covered copy of Thomas Paine's 'Rights of Man' than to a tract which counselled acceptance of an existence which was all too often bleak and defined by poverty and deprivation."

The problem 'Who could read "The Rights of Man"?' is likely to remain obscure for some time but it is arguable that it was a small proportion of those who could nominally read. To change the argument, since we know that it was read, it is reasonable to infer that the reading skills of those readers were quite advanced. It should at some stage be possible to identify with certainty the occupational groups whose radical interests and skills of comprehension would have matched the content and vocabulary of the work. As Dr. Frayling has pointed out, Paine was an excise officer and writes, he argues, in an artisan style.

It is important to add the rider that enthusiasm and interest are considerable incentives to reading perseverance. Professor Klare, an authority on readability, writes,

> "If (a writer) is interested only in the field of a small, specialised, highly educated audience, the principles of readability may not be of great concern. But if he is trying to reach a large, unselected, and less literate audeince successfully, readability principles are of major importance."

To change the thrust of this passage one may infer that those with a particular need for knowledge or illumination will take greater pains than they would for mere entertainment. However, even here there is a threshold which may be impassable.

There is little manuscript material available in the Bristol and Gloucestershire archives, but the letters from sailors considered in the

previous section are of particular interest since they come from our paradigmatic parish. The readability levels of a selection of these are as follows:

	Flesch
Letter 1	89
Letter 2	80
Letter 3	81
Letter 4	85
Letter 6	78

As can be seen, most letters come within the category 'easy'. This is an expected outcome and without any other knowledge of the writers there is little which can be inferred from it.

Two tracts may serve as examples of the considerable numbers published in the first half of the 19th century. The first is "The Broken Sabbath", an anonymous tract c. 1840 describing a boat accident on the Wye which occurred on a Sunday. This has a high ease of readability figure of 75. The other, "The Dairyman's Daughter - or A Good Death", by the Reverend Legh Richmond, is of standard difficulty at 60. This was originally published in 1814 and successively reprinted until 1850. It was considered to have been one of the most popular tracts written and total sales of over 2,000,000 are claimed for it.

The 19th century saw a progressive output from the presses, but it was relatively late in the century when popular publishers became aware not only of the content which would be appreciated by the poor but also the simplicity of style. We know from Louis James' work that Dickens though widely was not universally read, and "Fiction for the Working Man" has shown at least one substratum beneath that level. "Bleak House" gives a readability figure of 66, but an interesting feature of much of the sensationalist fiction of writers such as G.W.M.Reynolds was their surprisingly high level of surface difficulty. The following stories produce these scores:

	Flesch
Varney the Vampire	59
Mysteries of London	64

Some of Reynolds' quasi political writing, on the other hand, is often difficult or very difficult.

A Warning to the needlewoman and slopworkers	30
Death of a Pauper Child	43
Plight of a Sempstress	64

In the Death of the Pauper Child, as in some of Reynolds' fiction, the difficulty is accentuated by the adjectival and adverbial elements: few of the nouns would cause problems, except for occasional words such as 'duplicity'. Arguably, however, the meaning of a story can be followed even though polysyllabic adjectives and adverbs are not fully understood. "A Warning to the Needlewoman etc.", however, is very difficult by our standards, as measured objectively, and either indicates that Reynolds had completely misjudged his readership, or that that readership was considerably more resilient and competent than is generally thought.

The radical or quasi political writings which were available in the first half of the 19th century vary considerably in difficulty. Cobbett's "Rural Rides" (1827), with a strong narrative element, show a high readability index of 85; whereas the anonymous "Life of Swing by himself" (1830) is rather more difficult at 63. Robert Owen's "The New Religion" (1830) enters the category of difficult, though length of sentences rather than complexity of vocabulary is the factor which determines this level of difficulty.

"A Factory Victim" (1832), published in the "Poor Man's Advocate", and "The Factory Lad or the Life of Simon Smike" c. 1838, a penny issue novel, are both relatively easy to read as suggested by reading scores of 79 and 77 respectively. It is interesting, incidentally, to note how soon this derivative of Oliver Twist/ Nicholas Nickleby, the latter published in

1838-9, was pirated, and interesting also to note that though presumably intended for a different market, its readability level is not substantially different from its original.

Another radical work, 'A Chartist Sermon', preached in 1839, published in 1839 in 'The Political Pulpit' (John Rayner Stephens), shows a reading difficulty of 65, that is 'standard'. If, as appears to be the case, this was genuinely preached then it may represent a level of difficulty which the audience could cope with but which would probably have left many behind in reading it for themselves.

> "I have not spoken my own words: I have not said my own say: I have not invented my fables out of my own imagination: I have not addressed you in words calculated to excite your passions, and inflame and throw into phrenzy and madness those feelings that are easiest harrowed up and soonest aroused by men who have the power of speech at their command. I have done nothing like this. I have only said to you time after time, 'The mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' Have I been wrong in so doing ? God is our judge. He is my witness and yours; and I leave it in his hands. I know that he has a controversy with England, because I know him to be a God of justice, and a God of truth; a God of righteousness and mercy. I know he has a controversy with England, because the laws and institutions of England are laws of violence and institutions of blood."

In an earlier section we briefly considered the work of the SDUK and criticisms that its publications did not reach their intended audience. One of their ventures was "The Penny Magazine", first published in 1832. This sold 50,000 copies in the first week and by the end of the first year had a circulation of 200,000 with a readership estimated at five times this number[112]. Louis James claims that it had a number of readers among working men, including labourers, though it lost these after the first few years. When it closed in 1845 its circulation was still over 25,000 a week.

One's first reaction to some of the articles in the Penny Magazine is incredulity that it could have found a readership except among relatively well educated and experienced readers. Three examples follow, together with estimated levels of readability.

Agincourt

This discomfiture so alarmed the division under the Dauphin, that it wavered, and many individuals were seen retreating to the rear. The circumstance escaped not the eagle-eyed vision of the prince; he immediately caused a body of six hundred bowmen to wheel round upon the flank and rear of that division. It did so, but the French scarcely waited to be attacked; the Dauphin immediately quitted the field with 700 lances, many other knights, alarmed at the idea that they should be unable to regain their horses, which were in the rear, when they might want to fly also, followed; the dreaded "green jackets and white bows" poured in an incessant stream of deadly arrows upon their troops, which, thus deserted by their leaders, fell into confusion and speedily gave way.

Flesch: 46

Newport Gate, Lincoln (accompanied by two good engravings)

On each side of these are laid great courses of horizontal stones called springers, some of which are from six to seven feet long. Altogether the exceeding simplicity of the construction, and the amazing durability of the edifice, which not even so many centuries of exposure to wind and weather has materially affected, are sufficient to strike the most uninstructed eye with astonishment, to attract and interest the least antiquarian of observers. To describe the appearance of Newport Gate when it was in its pristine grandeur is rendered unnecessary by the restoration of it, exhibited in the engraving annexed, and which at once carries us back to the days of Imperial Rome.

Flesch: 28

History of a Mahogany Table

The next operation after the cutting of the planks is that of planing or smoothing the various surfaces. This is sometimes done when the plank is in the whole or uncut state; but whether before or after the sawing, the mode of producing a smooth surface is pretty much the same. There are planes of different sizes employed, according to the roughness of the wood. The first is a long coarse plane called the jack-plane; and with this the first roughness of the wood is taken off. It is succeeded by another plane, rather broader and heavier, called the trying-plane: this has a very smooth and true edge, and brings the surface of the wood to a true level.

Flesch: 60

The article on the Newport Gate is estimated to be 'very difficult' with a figure of 28. The account of Agincourt is quite difficult; the description of the making of a mahogany table is more straightforward. Levels of difficulty are likely to vary according to the author, but even so it appears that many authors made no concessions to level of reading

experience much lower than their own, and while there may have been some persistent and keen readers of the kind cited by Louis James who were willing to go without food to buy the magazine[113], it is likely that the general readability level would have made it inaccessible to most labourers and many others who were nominally readers. It is worth reminding ourselves that a large proportion of present day UK adults would not be able to understand the article on the Newport Gate.

It is difficult to make general conclusions in a section which is tentative and exploratory. Far more material needs to be considered, processed and, where possible, linked with known data concerning reading abilities. It is acknowledged, also, that we are working with imprecise instruments which may give some pointers but little definition.

Having made these caveats, let us summarise our findings. First it has been suggested that a recognition of levels of difficulty of different texts available to readers with moderate reading skills may give us some insight into what lay within their grasp and what didn't. I have suggested, for example, that "The Rights of Man" would not have been easy reading for someone who could just manage parts of the New Testament. Conversely, where it is known that some works are purchased in substantial numbers and, one assumes, read, then it is possible, having calculated the levels of reading skill necessary, to say something of the abilities of the readership. The wide sales of the works of Reynolds in London suggest that not only was there a market for sensational literature but also for the hostile satire aimed at corruption in high places. Presumably Reynolds' own Chartist leanings were contained in "The Mysteries of the Court of London", but the radical and republican expressions met a clear need which he continued to supply. As a Brighton bookseller told Thackeray, Reynolds was popular because 'he lashes the aristocracy'.[114] Radical and Chartist associations relied largely upon artisans for their members and organisers, particularly

shoemakers.[115] Although there is insufficient evidence to make definitive statements, some kind of pattern of the literacy of the superior artisan begins to emerge.

The works of Reynolds are documented as being on sale in Cheltenham and in our paradigmatic parish of SS. Philip and Jacob. In neither area were they selling well, and though it would be facile to make much of this we have other evidence to suggest that SS. Philip and Jacob was not 'a reading neighbourhood'.

We have suggested that readability measures confirm what was believed by critics and by senior members of the SDUK, that much of the material was too difficult for a general readership. Similarly, the objective evidence concerning the prose Cheap Repository Tracts tends to corroborate the internal evidence that they were largely intended for artisans and petite bourgeoisie, 'the middling classes' as More called them, rather than the genuinely poor.

We have seen that penny issues of novels were frequently no easier than those which they imitated and sometimes plagiarised. This suggests that there was a large reading public, at least in London, of reasonable ability but limited financial means, a reality which many entrepreneurial booksellers recognised and attempted to satisfy. But by 1865 there must also have been large numbers of readers living in less favoured areas of the country who had neither the financial resources nor, it is argued here, the reading skills necessary to take advantage of what was then available apart from tracts and Biblical material. It was a readership waiting for something to read. The cause of the reading revolution which was at one time attributed to the educational progress brought about by the Forster Act of 1870 is probably more strongly associated with the realisation, particularly by newspaper proprietors, that the levels of literacy, like layers of an onion, had scarcely been penetrated.

The advantages of readability measures are usually seen in the awareness they create of the problems readers face. So, it is argued, a study of readability historically may help us to become more aware of the skills (and lack of them) which various groups possessed at various points in the past.

CHAPTER V - CONCLUSION

Chapter V is a number of heterogeneous approaches to explore the elusive questions who read what or who could read what in the 18th and early 19th centuries and what could or did working men write. We have attempted, by analysing the difficulty of texts, to determine the levels of skill which would have been necessary to tackle them, and although this approach is acknowledged to be tentative and imprecise, it goes some way to providing an objective means of assessing the difficulty of texts.

We have contemporary accounts which throw light on the informal networks by which skills of general literacy were passed on, and it seems clear that these operated mainly within family or peer groups. It is reasonable to infer that members of a group which traditionally had substantial levels of general literacy would have had better opportunities of acquiring these skills either through formal schooling or informal agencies. In such groups where skills of letter writing had not been acquired there were often sufficient members of the group who could act as letter writers or amanuenses for payment or friendship. We see this operating quite clearly in letters from sailors considered in V(vii).

Internal evidence suggests that much of the improving literature produced in the Cheap Repository Tracts or SDUK was aimed at artisans and the self-employed and not at labouring groups. Readability estimates of SDUK material confirms what was stated at the time that much was too difficult for its intended readership. Library statistics also show that for one reason or another the labouring man used such facilities rarely.

Although it is difficult to quantify, there appears to be a spectrum of reading and writing skills approximately commensurate with the spectrum of literacy which we noted in Chapters 3 and 4. More highly skilled artisans and tradesmen appear from anecdotal sources, library records and

the expectations made of them to have had more highly developed skills, though this must have varied according to location and opportunity. Readability levels suggest, for example, that G.W.M.Reynolds, writing predominantly for a metropolitan readership of artisans and shopkeepers, many with radical leanings, is supposing a high degree of vocabulary recognition.

Our knowledge is likely to remain somewhat nebulous until more is known about the patterns of general literacy of different occupational groups and, as a paradigm, the total literacy of one occupational group.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

In conclusion, I wish to summarise what has been achieved in this study and suggest some possible ways forward in the reconstruction of popular literacy skills of the past.

I have established percentages of signature literacy for the majority of parishes in Bristol 1800-1870 and for most of the parishes of Gloucestershire 1760-1865 at decennial points. The parishes of Tewkesbury and SS. Philip and Jacob, Bristol, have been analysed in greater detail taking figures at quinquennial intervals. The reliability of marriage data as evidence of literacy has been strengthened, I claim, by the strong correlation which has been adduced between the data from the Bristol Statistical Society's survey and the parish records of SS. Philip and Jacob. The reciprocal point, that the reliability of statistical surveys is strengthened, may also be made.

It is claimed, similarly, that an important correlation has been established between the literacy of Gloucestershire labourers in custody and those indicating signature literacy at marriage. This is of value in several ways: first, it appears to indicate that the criteria used by prison officers are not substantially different, statistically, from objective signature data; secondly, it throws further doubt on early 19th century theories of ignorance and crime; thirdly, it enables us to consider prison statistics with more respect, though with due caution. Consequently, I have used James Hole's analysis of educational standards of inmates of Leeds Prison to give further corroboration to Dr. Schofield's equation that ability to sign is equivalent to a reasonable proficiency in reading.

Prison and marriage data have been used to construct tables of literacy for the main occupational groups in Gloucestershire for the greater part of the 19th century. These show substantial similarities to figures for other counties and high degrees of signature literacy for some artisan groups by the mid 19th century. The data indicate that female literacy overtook male

literacy between 1855 and 1865 and analysis of literacy by parental occupation shows clearly that this improvement was concentrated among daughters of labourers. Daughters of artisans, on the other hand, did not achieve higher percentages than sons and by 1865 some, the daughters of weavers for example, were producing worse figures than the daughters of labourers.

I have established that literacy rates of artisans remained relatively unaffected by poor educational provision in parishes. This may reflect the operation of informal networks or the effects of education in literacy which may have been integral to some trades and occupations. My conclusions following the analysis of signature literacy in terms of size of town and parish was that superior literacy of towns such as Cheltenham was produced by the occupational composition of the population; conversely where a large proportion of an urban parish was composed of labourers, as in SS. Philip and Jacob in 1838, the overall percentages are substantially depressed. Another finding was that the number of those couples making double marks was extremely low in many towns, a fact which has clear implications for the ability of families to 'survive' by mutual support in an urban environment.

My attempts to take the enquiry further and consider what other sources and strategies can add to the emerging patterns of literacy by occupation are more tentative. There are circumstantial links between the hierarchy of literacy by occupational group which have been demonstrated in chapters 3 and 4, but clear connections have still to be made. The use of readability measures, however crude, does create an awareness of the existence of levels of difficulty and may help us to explain, on the one hand, certain failures of communication or, on the other, may lead us to posit remarkable reading skills possessed by some artisans. A refinement of these techniques might enable us to show how specific reading 'publics' were constructed and to explore the communication channels to specific readerships. There appears to be considerable scope here for

analysing extant material using modern tests, techniques and aids.

A good deal remains to be done in Gloucestershire alone. It would for example, be valuable to have a full range of data particularly for the years where occupational information is available, together with a full transcription of the Gloucester Prison registers from 1812 to 1844 for analysis using computer assistance. More studies on a regional basis, particularly those containing occupational data, would either corroborate or modify theories concerning the homogeneity of signature literacy of some occupational groups. If, as the English and, seemingly, the French evidence seems to suggest, these are homogeneous groups then it should be possible for researches to move back to a national plane and by various means, including perhaps some suggested in Chapter 5, to build a profile of the total literacy of such groups.

What I hope to have demonstrated in this dissertation is the wealth of material which is available for analysis and the considerable variety of ways of doing so. It resembles, in this, an archaeological exploration in which partial recovery of the site predicates an integral structure. The belief that patterns exist is strengthened by the collateral studies described earlier and it is confidently predicted that similar studies will yield similarly positive results. Such collateral evidence and the strengthening of the value of signature data may contribute confidence to empirical research in this field.

Many questions remain unanswered. For example, although it appears that informal educational networks operated prior to 1870, our knowledge of how they worked is slender. More fundamental than this is the need for a satisfactory delineation of the spectrum of reading abilities possessed by different occupational groups, as adumbrated in chapter 5, and the answering of further questions which such hypothetical spectra suggest. Most importantly we need to know how superior reading skills reinforced group identity and to what extent higher literacy acted as a divisive force. These are problems which have been illuminated by theoretical debate: arguably there is a need to return to empiricism once the methodology has been agreed.

APPENDICES

A. Percentages of marks in the parishes of Gloucestershire

B. Transcripts of letters mainly from sailors to their homes in Bristol 1798-1811.

Marriage Registers - Percentages of marks - Gloucestershire 1760-1870

	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Amberley									66.6		
Ampney St. Peter						100	50	100			
Arlingham						25		10	100	0	100
Ashchurch						70	66.6	50	30	33.3	
Ashleworth						100	16.6	100	50	50	0
Aston Blank						80	75	0	50	100	
Aston Somerville							100	100			
Aston Subedge						100	100	100			50
Ashton-u-Hill						83.3	100	100	71.4	75	50
Avening						58.3	56.6	43.3	28.1	50	
Awre						27.7	57.1	28.5	29.4	16.6	31.2
Badgeworth						80	25	40	30	7.1	
Badgington							100	50	50	0	
Great Badminton						50	25	25	16.6	0	0
Great Barrington						33.3	66.6	66.6	50	16.6	0
Little Barrington						100	0		25	0	
Barnwood						100	50	0	33.3		
Batsford						0	0		50		
Barnsley	66.6	75	66.6	50	50	50	83.3	75	50		
Baunton	33.3	87.5	100	100	60	100	83.3	100			
Bibury	50	45.5	57.0	21.4	58.3	25	37.5	35.7	44.4	20	16.6

335.

continued

	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Beckford						50	0	0	60	40	0
Berkeley						71.8	62.9	44.1	56.8	29.2	26.5
Beverstone						100	50	0	0		100
Bishop's Cleeve						25	65	50	44.4	20	
Bisley						65.5	59.4	60.7	56.2		
Bitton						81.8	69.5	76.3	69.1	51.1	
" Holy Trinity								88.2	62	77.2	
Blaysdon								50	50		
Boddington						75	60		75	62.5	
Bourton on the Hill		50	66.6	60	50	50	25	0	25	66.6	0
Bourton on the Water						66.6	14.2	16.6	50		33.3
Boxwell (w. Leighterton)						50	75		100		
St. Briavels						80	50	54.3	57.6	87.5	
Brimpsfield						100	75	75	60	50	30
Broadwell							37.5	0	50		
Brockthorp						100	62.5	50		100	
Brockworth						0	100	100	0	37.5	
Bromsberrow	50	50	40	50	40	50	0	100	0	25	
Buckland						35.7	0	50	66.6	100	100
Bully						100	16.6		50	25	
Burthorpe								100			
Cam						72.7	44.1	55.5	38.8	58.3	

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
N.Cerney						58.3	100	100	50	10	25
S.Cerney	62.5	68.2	66.6	60	56.2	58.3	16.6	41.6	50		
Charfield						25	37.5	25	50	40	
Charlton Kings						70.8	43.7	16.6	25	20	16.6
Chedworth						58.3	0	41.6	33.3	50	41.7
Cheltenham						28.8	22.8	13.4	8.4		
Cherington						50	100	75	33.3		
Chipping Campden						59.3	39.2	30	37.5	25	
Chipping Sodbury						0	50		8.3		
Childswickham						0	62.5	71.4	62.5	75	50
Churcham						58.3	37.5	50	0	37.5	
Churchdown	50	90	66.6	71.4	68.7	50	75	35	45.6	75	
Cirencester	38.5					48.5	45.7	35	28.2	24.3	15.9
Clifford Chambers								37.5	100	25	
Coaley	100	75	43.7			62.5	50	12.5	16.6		
Coalpit Heath									100		
Coates						50	66.6	16.6	16.6		
Coln Rogers								25	0		0
Coln St. Aldwyn						25	50		33.3	25	33.3
Coln St. Dennis							50	0	25	0	
Cold Ashton						50	100		50		
Colesbourne						100	33.3		0	33.3	

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Compton Abdale						0	0	50			
Little Compton						33.3	0	100	50	33.3	0
Condicote								100		100	16.6
Corse						33.3	16.6	50	75	75	75
Cowley								75	0		
Cranham						50	75	50	0	37.5	
Cromhall						50	75	83.3	100	37.5	
Clifford Chambers							50		100	25	
Daglingworth							100	16.6	33.3	25	100
Deerhurst	66.6	64.3	66.6	44.4	57.1	50	75	61.1	33.3	100	100
Deynton						25	100		100		
Didbrook						50	50	0	100	33.3	25
Dirham & Hinton	43.7	68.7	70	50	28.6	50	66.6	87.5	33.3		41.7
Dodington	43.7	66.6	75	87.5	41.7	25		50	0		
Dorsington						100		100	50		
Down Ampney						75	50		100		
Down Hatherley						50	0		0		
Dowdeswell						25	100	83.3	0		
Driffield	50	75	100	75	71.4		50	50		100	
Dumbleton						0	100	75	0	25	25
Duntisbourne Abbots							0	0	50	25	33.3
Duntisbourne Militis	57.1	80	100	83.3	83.3						
Duntisbourne Rous								100			
Dursley 1755 64.7	47.7	56.6	55	60.7	25.7	53.4	26.4	46.8	63.6	43.7	16.7

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Dymock		81.2	83.3	50	50	75	36.5	60	52.5	45.8	87.5
Eastington	50	37.5	50	43.7	54.5	39.2	40.9	61.5	68.7	43.7	18.2
Eastleach Martin	37.5	50	50	85.7	70	25	0			0	
Eastleach Turville	77.7	41.7	50	71.4	66.6	100	50	50	50	100	
Ebrington						75	25	0	37.5	50	
Edgworth						0		0	0		0
Elkstone						50	50	75	66.6	100	75
Elmore		45.4	50	25	62.5		100	0	50	0	
Elmstone Hardwicke	85.7	50	80	83.3	50	20	100		100	100	43.7
English Bicknor	46.4	81.5	77.7	68.5	62.5	76.6	50	55	41.6		
Fairford						0	10	22.7	50		
Farmington						50		0	100		
Forthampton						100	100	100	37.5		
Flaxley	50	33.3	40	40	12.5	75	66.6	100	50		
Frampton-u-Severn						66.6	58.3	50	25		
Frampton Cotterell						35.7	42.8	87.5	100		
Fretheme	50	70	80	33.3		75	0		66.6	100	0
Frocester 1755 66.6	64.3	45.4	68.7	25	50	50	50	0		50	
Great Washbourne	25	60		80	33.3	0					
Hardwick							0	50	62.5		0
Haresfield						50	60	33.3	50	50	0
Harescomb							100		75		
Harnhill	16.6	50	66.6	66.6	50		75	50	0	0	
Hartbury						50	64.2	35.7	0	83.3	40

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Hasfield	33.3	33.3	87.5	100	37.5	40	50		100	50	0
Haselton						75	0	0	50		
Hampnett						100	0	100	75		
Hawkesbury						68.7	54.1	38.8	52.4	29.2	
Hatherop						0	66.6	75	50	0	0
Hawling						100	75	100			
Hayles						100	50				
Hempsted						50.9	40.5	33.8	27.2	26.5	
Hewelsfield						50	100	50	56.3		
Hill							50		100	0	37.5
Hinton-on-the-Green						50	100	62.5	75		
Horton						100			100	60	0
Horsley 1755 58.3	67.5	60	60.5	45.4	54.8	70.5	65.8	70	54.2	36.6	75
Huntley	83.3	71.4	41.7	57.1		50	60	10	50		
Iron Acton						50	60	66.6			
Christchurch in S.Hamlet of City							8.3	8.3	20		
St. John the Baptist City (Glos.)	41.6	31.2	58.3	57.1	60	34.6	42.5	30.6	28.9	18.3	14.1
St. Nicholas, City						47.8	58.3	43	30.2		
Kemerton						37.5	25	83.3	33.3		
Kempley	50	66.6	68.7	70	56.2	0	50	50	100		

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Kempsford						55.5	100			75	43.7
King Stanley						50	60	68.4	35.7	40	33.3
Kingscote	25	75	90	75		50	0		16.6		
Kingswood (nr Wootton)						44.4	37.5	35.7	100	30	0
Lessington	71.4	62.5	66.6	83.3	75	50					
Lea						25	33.3	60	70		50
Leigh 1755 81.2	100	66.6	58.3	20	70	60	50	25		25	
Lechlade 1755 50	61.1	50	70	25	50	58.3	7.1	45.4	56.3	40	
Lower Leimington						50	75				
Leckhampton						16.6	45	13.1	18.6	3.2	2.5
Leonard Stanley						50	40	0	30		35.7
Lydney 1755 50	83.3	33.3	64.3	71.4	42.8	43.75	30	55	47.9	30	
Little Dean						81.25	58.3	16.6	0	25	
Longborough						55	61.1	33.3	70	33.3	16.6
Longhope						0	75	50	41.7	58.3	12.5
Longney 1755 60		50	66.6	50	75	100		33.3	37.5	66.6	
Lower Guiting						50	0	60	43.8		
Lower Slaughter						62.5					

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Lower Swell						33.3	50	0	100		
Marston Sicca						50	0	0			
St. Mary de Crypt Glos.						56.25	27.7	27.2	34.2	20.4	9.5
St. Mary de Lode Glos.						49	29.2	44.09	34.2		
Maisemore							75	62.5	60	50	
Marshfield						43.3	29.2	100	50	50	
Marston Meysey						0			16.6	50	0
Meysey Hampton						40	0	0	25		
St. Michael's Glos.						50	9.0	25	15.4		
Mickleton						75		25	0	50	
Minchinhampton	56.5	59.4	54.8	38.9	63.3	56.4	67.1	52.7	35.7	37.5	20
Minsterworth						50	50		0		
Miserden						64.2	100	100	33.3		
Mitcheldean	66.6	80	41.7	35.7	65	20	75	25	0	75	0
Moreton-in-Marsh						10	27.2	21.4	41.7	30.8	28.6
Moreton Valence								100	50		
Naunton						50	0	25	58.3	12.5	25
Newent							59	55.5	59.4		60.7
Newland	47.7	59.1	56.2	51.2	59.5		51.1	46.4			
Newnham						70	58.3	37.5	23.1	30	47.2
Newington Bagpath	50	50		60	30	100	100	87.5	0		
North Nibley						53.3	64.2	62.5	50		33.3

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Northleach	41.6	54.5	50	31.8	36.4	37.5	25	25	40.1	60	16.6
Norton						70	0		100		50
Notgrove						25	25		75	25	50
Nymphsfield						83.3	68.7	100	50	25	50
Owlpen						25	100				
Oddington						50	100	33.3	44.4	0	16.6
Oldbury on the Hill								33.3	50	20	
Oxenhall						25	10	0	50	50	0
Ozleworth	58.3	42.8	64.3	40	66.7		100		0		
Painswick						51.2	55.8	36	50	26.9	
Pauntley							100	0		25	0
Pebworth						37.5	75	0	40	25	40
Pitchcombe						12.5		16.6		0	0
Prestbury						64.2	0	33.3	15.4	20.6	0
Preston								0	0	0	
Preston-on-Stow						100	75	0		50	27.8
Pucklechurch						0	100	10	100	66.6	83.3
Quedgley	68.7	40	50	57.1	50	0	50	100	12.5	16.6	
Quenington		56.2	35.7	38.9	57.1	50	50	100	0	0	
Quinton						62.5	57.1	35.7	66.6	0	0
Randwick						61.5	75	60	50	25	16.6
Rangeworthy								50	60	0	
Rendcombe	41.7	35.7	50	66.6	20		16.6	12.5	0	0	
Great Rissington						100	12.5	0	0		0

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Little Rissington						100	12.5	0	0		0
Rockhampton	70	61.1	83.3	80				75			
Rodborough						60.4	41.6	51.8	36.7	20.6	5.5
Rodmarton						25	0	33.3	0	0	
Rudford	62.5	100	66.6	75	50	100		100	25	16.6	0
Ruardean	50	37.5	58.3	42.8	40.9	50	50	40	28.6	33.3	
Newland						65	51		38.3	57.7	
Salperton							75				
Sandhurst						0	33.3	50	12.5		
Sapperton	43.7	64.3	30	68.7	68.7	87.5	50	0			
Saul						25	100	40	33.3	0	0
Sevenhampton						50	50	50	0		40
Sherborne	72.2	58.3	33.3	57.1	21.4	37.5	75	0	50	33.3	0
Shenington						75	0	0			
Shipton Sollars						0	62.5	50			
Shipton Moyne						60	50	100	20		50
Shurdington							0	33.3	100	25	33.3
Siddington						75	50	66.6	10	100	
Siston						83.3	58.3	66.6	50	50	
Lower Slaughter								50	50		
Upper Slaughter						50	25	0	50	50	
Slimbridge						40.9	50	12.5	50	12.5	0

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Snowshill						62.5	66.6	16.6	50	33.3	50
Southrop						0	100	87.5	83.3	33.3	16.6
Little Sodbury							75		50	50	
Old Sodbury	41.7	62.5	54.5	76.7	70	0	50	100	60	83.3	
Somerford Keynes	50	68.2	75	83.3	61.1						
South Cerney						56.2			50		
Stanway						66.6	0	50	75	16.6	25
Stanton						0	0	0	50	33.3	
Standish						100	91.6	37.5	87.5	0	50
Staunton	78.6	50	66.6	64.3	50	66.6	70	83.3	50	0	
Staverton						83.3	50		0	50	
Stinchcombe						80	83.3	50	62.5	64.2	0
Stonehouse						60.4	31.8	44.4	17.5	26.3	0
Stow-on-the-Wold	55	44.4	50	55.5	44.4	56.25	40.9	42.3	72.2	62.5	43.7
Stratton	43.7	70	58.3	58.3	46.2		20	50	33.3	20	8.3
Stroud	6 3.6	63.2	59.1	47.9	51.4	62.7	51.5	47.7	28.6	13.6	22.4
Sutton-under-Brailes											
Upper Swell	58.3	25	37.5	75	60	50	75	100	0	16.6	
Swindon							83.3	10	25	0	
Taynton						100		25	90	50	75
Temple Guiting						50	58.3	0	50	25	
Tetbury						44.4	58.6	54.5	50	31.8	11.1
Tewkesbury	48.1	54.2	57.3	47.7	43.6	63.1	50	47.5	46.7	29.7	32.1
Tibberton						100	33.3	50	33.3	0	16.6
Tidenham						93.7	40	45.4	7.1		
Tirley	100	75									

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Thornbury						50	55	40	34.6	10	58.3
Toddington cum Stanley							20	37.5	0	50	
Todenham						40	0	50	83.3	25	7.1
Tormarton						62.5	50	50	60	30	33.3
Tortworth						50	100	75	0	0	
Treddington								100			
Turkdean						50		75		100	100
Tyrley						30	66.6	100			
Tytherington						50	0		25		
Twyning						61.1	42.8	60	75	12.5	37.5
Uley						63.7		5	25	0	0
Upper Swell						100			0		
Upleadon				80	80	0			50		
Upton St. Leonards						0	50	16.6	44.4	16.6	11.1
Wapley cum Codrington						50			100		
Welford						100	50	40	37.5	37.5	0
Westerleigh						61.1	64.2	35.7	25	83.3	
Westbury-upon-Severn	60	64.7	56.6	36.4	55	22.2	42.8	70	39.3	7.1	
Westcott							50	0	33.3	0	0

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Westonbirt						75	0	0		0	
Weston sub Edge							66.6	50			
Weston-upon-Avon						100	0	50	100		
Whaddon							0	12.5	25		
Whitminster							50	60			
Whittington							83.3	100		0	0
Wickwar						0	0	0	50	43.7	0
Wick & Abson						25	0		100	0	
Willersey								75	41.7		
Winson						100	0				
Winstone						75	75	33.3			
Windrush						33.3	60		66.6	50	0
Withington							66.6	66.6	50	66.6	16.6
Woodchester						75	59	50	60	16.6	20
Woolastone						50	75	50	37.5	75	66.6
Wormington							50	50			0
Wotton-under-Edge	37.5	66.7	42.8	33.3	52.3	50	48.5	54.4	46.9	45	23.3
Yate						50			37.5	50	50

continued	1765	1775	1785	1795	1805	1815	1825	1835	1845	1855	1865
Holy Trinity, Forest of Dean									90	32.1	
West Dean									75	40	12.5
St. John, Dean									65.6		
St. Paul, West Dean									53.4	45	35.7

In the following transcriptions gaps have been left where it is considered that the sense requires a pause; except where indicated, there is no punctuation. Lines have been substituted for words which are completely indecipherable. Doubtful words have been underlined.

Letter 1

Guernsey Sept.r 11.th 1803

Deare Sister,

I send you those few lines to let you know there his a expidition fited out of this place against the French I believe it his an Isleand not far from us all the Ships belonging to this Squadron his going, except Ours the reason our Ship done not goe his that She draughts to much water that his She is to large and the place fery rockey and dangerous for Our Ship the Signal his made now wile I am writeing to get under way Our Admiral James Summarises has hoisted his flag on board the Cibrus Frigate now under way / I think I has as well where I ham as to be with them but if it had been my lot to have whent with them no dougt but providence would have protected me has it have either if not I must have shared has many of my brave country have you will hear tell how they succede Deare Sister I ham very well and I hope you are Well and my uncle better It his Bristol fair What sort of a fair have you had I suppose there was plenty of young women there I immagin you and your/sweet heart whas there If I had a been with you I would have gave you a handsome fairing but Sister if you are aney ways given to a partner be fery carefull of these kind of people and Sister If you think of doing it never do it with out you have percectley well acquainted with his temper and behaviour for it will be to late when you have mad maney connections together now Sister your future happyness would depend on these few lines of advice Sister I think it has Brotherley duty to tell you of those dangers which I hope will improve your youthfull mind Sister your Brother would ever wish to see you happy and comfortable Let me be ever so Dear Sister I lives in hopes of being at home to see you happy and comfortable has I hope will be shortly my own case Sister wright every opertunity I

have sent to you three letters and have not received any answer I hope Sister you will not neglect sending to your Brother So no more at present from your affectionate and loving Brother, R

To:

Frances Raymond
Phillip Daniels
At
David Street neare
the Broad Plain,
Bristol

Letter 2

Saint Mary's Scilly Nov.r 20th 1798

Dear Father & Mother

It is a Long time since I have heard from you therefore I take this opportunity of sending these few Lines hopeing you are both well as I am at this time, not being properly Settled made me neglect in not writeing to you. Indeed we are not properly Settled now, as our Lieut the Commanding officer Departed this Life Last night after a Long Ilness which he bore with patiance, and resignation I hope you are all well my Brothers & Sisters Give my Love to them we expect to be from here very sone as we must have/another Liet. in our old ones rome we have been here ever since the 29th of August last and when we return I will send you some money I received a Small Triffle of money therefore I could not send you any as being in want of Clothes & c Remember me to all my abscent and enquiring friend and Duty to yourself & mother

and Remain your Dutiful Son

Samuel Jeffryes

Board H.M.S. Brig

Please
Send me an answer by return
of Post if the Post charge you more
than one Penny for the Letter you must
return the Back and they will return you
the overcharge

Mrs James Holbroke
at Mr Harbet's Shop
Lewin's Meade Bristol Somerset
1d paid

Letter 3

Postmouth the 17th 1808

D^{r} Mother

I hope to find you in a good state of health which I am at present I receifed your letter the 17th. of September the money that I put in the Post office the last Letter I receifed From you You said that you did not receifed the money that was put in the post office for you after you went away I received a Note from the Post office to certefy that you Received the Money the 25. so I would wish to know Whether you Received the money or Not the reason that I did not wright Was I did Not make answer to the last Letter Because I was satisfied to think that you had got the money after you geting home. I hear by your leter that you was in a very bad state of health In all the letters you wrote you did not make mention of my Sister to me I beg you will give my love to my Sister Hannah and to all Friends I beg you will Take care of the shot you took off me untill I shall see you again right an answer to this letter as soon as possible Dear Mother and not to right any more untill I will send you another Letter.

I am Yours affectionate son

John Parker

the Next letter you send

have it wrote plain

Wm Nichols Gives his kind Love

to you and hope you are well

he would sent you a Letter if I

ad Not

John Parker seaman on board

of his majesties ship Suffolk

To Be left at Mr Hewins

opposite the 3 tuns for

Eliza Parker

Great ____an st

Lawfords Gate Bristol

Letter 4

H M Ship Partridge Cove off Cork Ireland

February 21st 1810

Dear mother

this comes with my kind love to you hoping it will find you in good health as it leaves me at present thank God for it letting you know that I am now at Ireland about five miles from Cork and how long we shall stop here I cannot tell for we have got the Irish Station dear mother I sent you a letter When we was at Spithead letting you know that I was aboard his majesties sloop of war the partridge where I embarked at Plymouth about three months ago and have been several cruises since and are now come to Ireland dear mother I am the Gunners servant and he is a good kind of man and that makes my situation better than it would be for a man of war is a miserable place but I hope I shall be clear before long and be at home with you again please to give my kind to Mrs Chimea and her husband and Mr and Mrs Hutchman and John Hutchman and all enquiring friends So no more at present from your affectionate and dutiful Son James Harding

P S please to answer this by return of post and direct for me onboard his majesty's Sloop of war Partridge Cove off Cork Ireland or elsewhere

For Mrs Hester Harding
Temple Street
Weavers arms near temple Bristol
Somersetshire England

James Harding Seaman

Letter 5 Bristol july 9th 1810

Hond Sirs,

My Brother George Cummings Seaman belongd to H.M.S. Lavinia when at Flushing Septr 1809 - he was sent with 25 of his shipmate to H M Gun Boat N 36 of the 4th Division under the command of Capt Abbedore: he wrote me from Flushing Septr 24th 1809 to inform me of the same : and that all their cloathes and bedding was on Board this respective Ship : I answered his Letter according to his request but have not Recd A Line from him since : which makes me very unhappy : I now most Humbly Intreat to know if there are any Returns from yr said Gun Boat Received at your office or must I apply Elsewhere as I am Extremely anxious to know if he is Living and on Board the Said Gun Boat or drafted to any other Ship: your kind attention and speedy answer will now oblidge and serve your most obedt servant

Mary X Hawkins
mark

Please to direct for me
Great Georges Street
Without Lawfords Gate
Bristol

This is to Certify the Hon.Ble Commis.nrs of H M Navy
That the above subscribing Mary Hawkins an Inhabitant
of our Parish is as far as we know or believe the Lawful
Sister and nearest of kin living Belonging George Cummings
Late of yr Lavinia and N 36 Gun Boat as above described:

Given under our Hands

James New) Minister
George Hodson)
)
John Winwood Jr) Churchwardens

Letter 6

Giberalter 14 July 1810

Mr Hearton

It is with Regret I have to inform you of John your Sons Death after a Liver illness of on a Decline Since ever He came aboard You may Depend that all attention has Been Paid him even supose you were along Side of Him yourself I atended him Regular every Day from the Begining of his trouble he is to Be intered ashore on the Rock of Giberalter as we lie in the Harbour of that Place in my opinion the Sea fareing did not agree with his Health you will have the goodness to write me an answer to this when you Receive this (turn over)

Direct to Wm Gloster Medeteraneon or Elsewhere John Hall Paid the greatest atention to him that lay in his Power

So we Shall Conclude

with Respect yours

Wm Gloster and John Hall

Letter 6 (2)

Mrs Bullock

I have to inform you that I am in Perfect good health thank good and hopes this will find you in the like Manner you will have the goodness to inform my Father and Sisters that I am in Perfect Good Health we lay at Cadiz three Days and now at Giberalter and expects to Sail up the Straits every Day - Give my Best Respect to your Daughter Mary likewise your Son Ja^{s} and his wife Remember me to John Turner and Ja^{s} Smith tell Mr Horrow to give my Best Respect --------- Saly ------ -------- - let me know how John ---------- is or has got better - and in the like Maner his mother and his Sister Saly - We Expect to go where Isaac Smith is on our voyage

my Respects to Wm Smith - So I Shall Conclude with Respect your

Wm Gloster

aboard H.M.S. Lively Mediteranian

or Elsewhere

Letter 7 Spithead Dec^{r} 19th 1810

Dear Aunt & Wife

I have wrote those few lines To Inform you I should be Glad for you to come down hear to me imediatly For to settle your Sons Business and recive the Money that is due to you & if you cannot come down yourself Please to send down my wife with a Certificate from the Churchwarden & a note from you to say that you Empowerd my wife to Recive the money for you and then I will gett the money for you every penny and Endeavour to gett the wages that is due to him besides the money Deposited in a gentlemans hands in this Ship So I hope you will come yourself or Else send my Wife as Quick as possible as the sooner you come the better Give my Love & Best respects to my Wife & Child & to all Friends Please to come up or Else send my Wife as Soon as you Receive this

Having no More to say at Present rem^{n} Yours & c

John Vinor

Ann Vinor - to be left at

Mrs Hungerfords

near the Rose & Crown

On the narrow Plain St Phillips

Bristol

Letter 8

H M S Blago Malta

20th December 1810

Dear Father & Mother

I Embrace this opportunity of writing you these few lines hoping they will find you in good health as this leaves me at Present Dear Parents I hope we will have the Pleasure of Meeting again in a Short time I assure you that Nothing would give me more Pleasure than to hear from you at all times - and it would give me much more Satisfaction to have the Pleasure of Enjoying your Company at home we are now Laying here with the want of a Foremast and Bowsprit which were carried away and there is a great report of our Ship going home but there is no Certainty as Yet but however, it is Certain that we will not remain in this Country much Longer and on our return I flatter myself with the Idea of Enjoying your Company at home I hope you will not fail to give my Best respects to all Relations & Friends in G_____ at ------ I have to Inform you that David Mooney is coming home now in H.M.S. Faun She is to Sail tomorrow from this Port this letter comes by the Faun

I was Extremely Sorry to hear of my Fathers Illness I hope that he is recovered by this time it grieves me to the Heart to hear of any illfortune that attends any of my family Pray give my Love Particularly to my Brothers and Sisters and Pray do not Neglect to write to me by every opportunity that offers; I have seen saw Charles Bird on Board H M S Acorn who was Extremely Sorry to hear of his wife's Death having nothing material to add I shall conclude with my best Love to You and our all

Dear Parents Your most Dutifull Son till Death

Edward James Taunton

--- John Hemmings
Great Ann Street
Bristol

Letter 9

Island of Zante Jan 4th 1811

D.r Mother & Father

This comes to you with my Love and best Respects, hopeing most sincerely that it will find you in good health as by the Blessing of Divine Providence it leaves me at this time. I received your Letter 19th last Month & was happy to hear of your Welfare - we have taken 3 of the Ionian Ilse from the French since I sent the last Letter - I hope my Brothers & Sisters are all in good Health and desire my Love to them as also to my Cousins who I hope are well - with respect to news we have none, of any consequence the Islands we are in Possession of are small but Abound in good Wine and Provisions which are very cheap - so I Conclude with subscribing myself

Your Loving Son

Wm Taylor

P.S. Please to Direct for me

Cap.t Greens Comp.y 1.st Batt.n 35.th Reg.t

Island of Zante - Medetiranian -

Letter 10

Prince Freridick June 12 1811

Dear father & Mother

I Embrace the Earlest opportunity of written those fue Lines wich I hope will find you all well as it Leves mee a great deal better and to Lett you know that I ave Reseivd the 7 shilling that my sister sent mee and I am very Mouch oblidge to Her for it My dear Mother I did not gett the Letter till the Latter End of week as it was delaid in the Post Office but Mary Chapman sent mee the Letter on Bord to Lett mee know How uneasey you was about mee and I told her that She had no Oceashion to writ as I should write my self But Dear Mother Shee has Been with mee On Bord Ever since I Left the Hospitle Dear Mother I cannot tell how Longe I shall Stay On Bord of this Ship weather I Shall Bee sent Out in aney Other to gain my One or weather I Shall Remain Hear till My Ship Comes in to this port again My Dear Mother I wish that I Could ave found your words to ------- as you wrot to Mary I would not ave Stopt in Plymouth Longe as my Longen dissire is to see you as soon as posiable I can I wish it was today then I should Bee Happyer than Ever tho I Cannot Say but there is maney thousands shares the same feal as I dou so it is of now youse to repine So My Dear Mother please to give my Love to my Brother and Sisters and my Nepues and I hope the are all well Plese to give my Love to my Aunt Packer and Phelie and all inquiring frends So My dear Mother I Conclude with my Love & Dutey to you and remain your

Dutiful Son William Liddon

direct for mee on Bord H M Ship Prince Fredrick ------

Plymouth Dock

continued

Letter 10, continued

When you write direct to the Giberalter as I am/are Left

Plymouth this day in the acaster frigett to gain my ship

Ann Hicks Lyddon
Gibralter

Thomas Lidden

No 4 Borrow Lane, Outside

Lorance Hill

Lafford -------

Bristol

Letter 11

H M Ship Daphne July 11

Dear Whife

I Send these few lines with My love to you in hopes it will find you in good Health as this leaves me at this time thank God Dear Whife I Reseved youre letter dated the 29 and it give me great Pleshure to hear that you are in Good health and safe Arrivd at home but I am sorey to heare that you cannot gett Anney Employment But I hope By this time you will have Reseved youre papers to gett my half Pay which will asist you a littele I hope you will make youre as comfortable as you can untill it lys in my Power to asist you farther which I trust will not be maney months as whe have Bene vearey Sucsesefull sins we left England we have Taken Ten vearey Rich Prizes and Sent them to England and they will Be all Payable on ower arival which will Be in November Dear Whife I hope you will not Neglect ancering my letters and lett me now if you have my half Pay or not and Whethere you hade Reseved from the time of my Embarcking on Borde the daphne or not as youre papers was made out for that time Give my Beast Respects to Mrs Cottell and her Son lackwhise Will King and I hapey to hear they are in God health lett me now all the News you now in your Next your letter whas only Nine days from Bristol to me and I hope this will Not longer from me to you Send to me as Before this letter is franked and so as all that I have sent as I now not the reson of your paying the full postage

So No more at present from youre Afecnant Husband till Death

William Thomas

H M Ship Daphne
June the 13
(top of letter says July)
William Thomas R Marine

Elizabeth Thomas
--- Mr Woodwards
Start Gloucester Lane Bristoll

Letter 12

Isle of France October 23th 1811

Mrs Fowler

I am sorry to Give you the Malancoly news of The Death of your Husband Jo^{s} Fowler Who Died of Flux on the 29 day September & you are Entitled to his wages & prize money for the taking of the Island of Java & for What his Cloathes was sold for so you Must send your Certificate of Marriage enclosed in a letter to the navy pay office London were you Will Get What money What might be Due to him Captain Bunce of the R Marines whose Command he was under would have wrote to you himself But by his Desire I have done it an purpose to save you the expence of postage so I Conclude With being a partner of your Grief for the Loss of A Good Comarade on my side & an Affectionate Husband on yours so no more At preasent from

Yours & c c

Ja^{s} Phillips

Ja^{s} Phillips R Marine

On board of H M Ship Scipion

Scipio

Joseph Shilham

Suzanna ------ at Mrs Jacksons

For Susan Fowler

At Mr Wm Fowlers

Salmons Court

Old Market Street

Bristol

Letter 13

His Majestys Brig Spider Barbadoes

27 March 1812

D^r^ Mother

I take this favourable opportunity in writing to you hoping you enjoy good health as this Leaves me at present thank God D^r^ Mother Excuse me for not sending you the Money you mised, but you may depend the Commissioner was in such a hurry to send us to Sea, that we were not paid, but I Remitt you my half pay from this place which you must be very carefull how to Draw it as you have to go to the Custom House to Draw it atthe same time they will Question you about my name and age when you receive it write to me and let me Know how much it is. I think it will be of some use to you untill I go Back to England when I will be able to go home once more Give my love to my Brother and Sisters and Father and let me know how William Davis does Remember me to all enquiring Friends let Mr and Mrs Evans Know I am well and desired to be remem^d^ to them Mrs Harvey and Sons I conclude D^r^ Mother with my Best Respects and duty to you and Father untill death

John Henry Booth

N B

When you write direct to
Jn^o^ Henry Booth Seaman
H M Brig Spider Barbadoes
or elsewhere - West Indias

P S Let Samuel Smith's brother know he
is still on Board with me and well

Letter 14

Navy Office 1st June 1812

Sir

We have received your Letter of the 26th Ultimo, respecting an Allotment from J.H.Booth of His Majesty's Brig Spider, in favour of his Mother.

In answer We acquaint you, that no such Allotment appears to have been yet transmitted to this Office; but will be forwarded when received with as little delay as possible.

We are,
Sir,
Your humble servants

F.I.Hartwell

Legge

Hanson

Revd Wm Day
Vicar of St. Philips
Bristol

Letter 15

Plym Hospital June 11th 1812

Dear Father & Mother

I take the opportunity of Writing to you to Acquaint you of the unfortunate Accident that has happened to me on Friday the 5 I happened to fall from the Mizen Riggess down to the Poop and broke my thigh Bone, and brused my Inside verey much which caused me to spit blood I desire you will not be any way unhappy about me I hope ~~you~~ that I shall soon recover again I received my Brothers Davids Leter and very sorry to hear of the misconduct of Charles I hope you'll not omit sending me an Answer the first opportunity My kind Love to my Brothers and Sister and all enquiring Friends

I am your Affte Son

Wm Moody

Direct the 56 Ward
Royal Navy Hospital
Plymouth

James Moody
N 2 Little Ann Street
Without Loppards Gate
Bristol Glostershire

Letter 16

Friday Morning

Friends

Having by the request of your Son Wrote the Forgoing Lines Concering the State of his Health and the Misfortunes that Happend to him - But I am very sorry to Inform you that H___ is no more He Departed this Life at 9 A Clock this Morning I am quite a Stranger to his Affaires only I know that he had the sum of 14^{s} - 6^{d}, and It is the Gov^{r} Office and I suppose that he has some months Wages Due so no more from the Friend of your Son

Ja^{s} Peart

Letter 17

Cambrai France April the 26 1813

Dear father & Mother

This comes With my Kind Love to you hoping to find you in a good state of health as this Leaves me at present thank God for it dear father your Letter I have --- no oppertunity for to send you one in return untill now and i cannot send but once a month Dear father you inform me that you like to Lose ann rhymer But i -------- Glad to hear that She is got a great deal better dear father you inform me that my Brothers wife have another Son but i thought it was the first Son for her increase non aneything of aney other dear father you likewise inform me that you are going to call it Sam[1] in rission besconce reason because of me for to keep one of the name in the family that i ham well satisfied in dear father you inform me that you sent me the Sum of £3 that i have not received yet but I have been to the Gentleman in the town that Paye me the Last money and Showed him my letter he informed me that my money his not come from Paris yet but the money is safe and I shall Get it in a few days dear father you Inform me that Ester Clark is maried that i am Glad to hear you will kindly remember me to her ---------- Dear father I sent Home a power to you on the 6 of march the same I hope you have received if you have and have Got the money you Will be so good as to send me the Sum of £5 on the first of July then I shall have It in Good time for to drink off/all your healths on Christmas day and I hope you will all do the Same in return to me dear father if you are in want of aney money your Selph when you receive my money you will take what you want and Let me know what you receive and what you take for your Selph for I think my Selph in debt to you Greatly dear father you likewise

inform me that my aunt Jinney is dead I ham Sorry to hear of but I hope the Lord will Spare you and my mother and all my Brothers and Sisters untill I return to See you all once more dear father Since I have Been on Shore I have add a great deal of Sickness I have add the fever five times that have pulled me down Greatly Since i have Been Captured dear father I did not Like to Let you now of it for I thought It would Grieve my mother and Some of the rest of my friend but dear friends all to Gether I ham a great deal better in health at this present time then I have been since i have been in the Country (turn over) dear father what my mother wants me to do Concerning the will and power that I will do in august for it is of no use for me to do before upon the account of the power that I Sent home Last untill the above mentioned time for I did forget it unless I sent the power home or Else it would Been so easy for me to do one as the other but I will do it in August that will not be Long first dear father I shall not have the opportunity of writing to you much longer by what I Can Learn if you find that you do not hear from me you must not Give me up for Lost for we Cannot do as we Like in such a place as this if you do not hear from me you will do as I desired you about sending me the money in august I hope dear father you will excuse my Scribble for this time but I hope dear father I shall be able to write the next one better for I shall do my best for to Learn So I have no more to say in priase of my Selph but i still remain your Dutiful Son

Samuel Daniel

dear father you will be so Good as to Let me now if a man by the name of Barnell have Called upon you concerning his Brother that is in the prison along with me remember me to daniel Sweet & his wife and all inquirein Friends

N B Please to write as quick as possible

Mr Samuel Daniel
to be left at Mr James Stansfield
Castle Street
Bristol England

Samuel Daniel)
Prisoner of War)

Letter 18

Leith Dec^{r} 1st 1810

Mrs Hungerford

I have taken this opportunity of writing these few lines hoping to find you In good Health as this leaves me at present

Dear Friend - I have the malencholy news to inform you that your Son has been ill in this Ship for a long time & I am sorry to inform you That yesterday the 30 of November about 2 o clock in the afternoon your Son Jas Hungerford Departed this life & I as a frend & townsman had thought proper to lett you know it but I hope you will not take any trouble about it as tis a Debt we must all pay either sooner or Later & I have to inform you he was quite sensible to the last & had every care taken of Him just as Much as if he had been at home with you & I hope you will not take any trouble about it as tis all to no purpose - & he did not Die a Sudden death for he had been complaining a long time & taken to his bed nearly three weeks before he Expired & ____ out of respect to you & your son thought proper to write to you & inform you of all particulars & I have to inform you That your Son has Upwards of Ten Pounds due to him & we Expects to come to England every day and if you come down to me I will gett the money for you as we Expects to be in Portsmouth in the course of a few days & then I will send you Letter to you come yourself or send your Son in Law & reseve the money due to you it will be proper for you to bring a note from the Church Warden to Certify that you are His mother & that will be all required of you to gett the money without any further Trouble

I Rem^{n} your friend & well wisher till death

John Vinor

continued

N B if you please you may answer this & Direct for John Vinor Seaman on board H M Ship Hussar Lying in the Downs near Deale as I shall be there before your letter comes to Hand please to put in one penny with your letter & I have it will post free

Letter 19

His Majestys Ship Hussar

Spithead 28th Decbr 1810

Revd Sir

In answer to yours of the 28th Inst. I have to inform you, there is Ten Pounds lon board belonging to James Hungerford, deceased, which I will remitt when informed the safest manner of conveyance. His Effects were sold on board and the Account transmitted to the Navy board, the amount of which will be received with his wages By your forwarding his register, and a certificate signed by you to the Navy Board certifying the Infirmities of his relatives - - - - - I have no doubt the amount of both will be remitted

I am

Sir

With the greatest regard

Your most obedient Servt

Ansd 3 Jany

NOTES

1

Interim definition of Literacy

1 (a) SIMON, J Paper on definitions of literacy prepared for Leicester Seminar 1980

(b) ALDRICH, R. Literacy, illiteracy, semi-literacy and marriage registers. History of Education Society Bulletin 22, 1978.

I am indebted to Mrs. Simon for points made in the above paper.

2 UNESCO: Literacy as a Factor in Development, 1965, 7.

3 SCHOFIELD, R.S. The Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England. Literacy in Traditional Societies Ed. J.GOODY.

4. McKEE, cited in Moyle, Teaching Reading. Quoted by J.Simon, op. cit.

Introduction

5. SCHOFIELD, R.S. Contribution in plenary session: Seminar on Literacy, History of Education Society, Leicester 1980.

6. JOHANSSON, E The History of Literacy in Sweden in comparison with some other countries. Educational Reports Umeå No. 12 1977.

7. GRAFF, H. Contribution: Seminar on Literacy, op. cit.

8. SCHOFIELD, R.S. Ibid.

9. PLANT, M. The English Book Trade, p.34, quoted by G.A.CRANFIELD: The Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760.

10. British Journal No. 2. February 1852: The Literature of the Streets.

11. HODGSON, W.B.: Exaggerated Estimates of Reading and Writing: Transactions of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science, 1867. Quoted by L.STONE: Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900. Past and Present No. 42. Feb. 1969.

12. LEAVIS, Q.D. Fiction and the Reading Public p. 177.

13. LEAVIS, Q.D. Answers to formal and informal questions, Cambridge 1979.

14. LAQUEUR, T. Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture, p.210.

15. EISENSTEIN, E L. Journal of Modern History Vol. 40, No. 1. March 1968: Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought. A Preliminary Report.

NOTES

CHAPTER 1

1. LASLETT, P. The World We Have Lost.
2. SILVER, H Oxford Review of Education III(i) 1977 p.60: Aspects of Neglect; the Strange Case of Victorian Popular Education.
3. SUTHERLAND, G : Study of the History of Education Vol. 54 1969 pp. 49 ff.
4. WEBB, R.K. English Historical Review X 1950.
5. FLETCHER, J , Moral and Educational Statistics of England and Wales JSSL X 212, September 1847.
6. STONE, L , Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900, Past and Present No. 42 1969.
7. SARGANT, W.L. Progress of Education. Journal of the Statistical Society of London Vol. XXX, 1867.
8. SCHOFIELD, R.S. (i) Dimensions of Illiteracy: Explorations in Economic History X 1972-3
   (ii) Measurement of Literacy: :Literacy in Traditional Societies, ed. J.GOODY.
9. SANDERSON, M. Literacy and Social Mobility in the Industrial Revolution in England, Past and Present 56, August 1972 pp. 75-104.
10. J.GOODY ed. Literacy in Traditional Societies. C.U.P. 1968.
11. Ibid. p.3.
12. Ibid. p.5.
13. COLLISON, R.B. Street Literature.
14. Ibid. p.10.
15. ADAMS, W.E., Memoirs of a Social Atom, p.71.
16. WEST, E.G. Education and the Industrial Revolution, p.38.

17. FRIPP, C.B. Chairman, Bristol Statistical Society: Report on Condition of Bristol Poor 1837-1838.

18. NEUBERG, V. Penny Literature.

ALTICK, R.D. The English Common Reader 1957

19. ROYLE, E. Mechanics' Institutes.

20. HOLYOAKE, G.J. The History of Co-operation p.101.

21. EISENSTEIN, E. Journal of Modern History Vol. 40 No. 1, March 1968

22. BRIGGS, A ., Press and Public in Early 19th Century Birmingham.

23. ASHTON Chapbooks of the 18th Century. Published 1882. Reprinted 1966. Introduction p.vii.

24. LACKINGTON, J Memoirs of the first 45 years of his life, written in 47 letters to a friend , p.195.

25. ADAMS, W.E., op. cit., p. 71.

26. Second report on the state of agriculture. PP 1836 viii (189) Q 5020, 5022

27. Public Libraries Committee. Qq 1381-1402 quoted by R.D.Altick, op. cit.

28. AUSTIN, E. Anecdotage, stray leaves from the notebooks of a provincial reporter.

29. WEBB, R.K., op. cit., p.347.

30. BAKER, W.B.: Parish registers and illiteracy in East Yorkshire, p.7. East Yorkshire Historical Association (quoting Thompson, Flora: Larkrise to Candleford: an Oxfordshire autobiography).

31. SCHOFIELD, R.S., Explorations in Economic History, Vol. 10, 1972-3, p. 451.

32. SANDERSON M., op. cit.

33. LAQUEUR, T.W. The Cultural Origins of Popular Literacy in England 1500-1850. Oxford Review of Education, Vol. 2, No. 3, 1976.

34. Ibid. p.259.

35. Ibid. p.260.

36. ADAMS, W.E., op. cit.

37. LAQUEUR op. cit.

38. SMITH, R.J., Education, Society and Literacy. Nottinghamshire in the mid 19th century. Historical Journal, Birmingham University Vol. XII 1969.

39. STEPHENS W.B. Illiteracy and Schooling in the Provincial Towns 1640-1870: A Comparative Approach.

40. Ibid. quoting Royal Commission Report on Popular Education, iii, 1861.

41. DOBBS, A.E., Education and Social Movements 1700-1850, p. 160.

42. LUCAS, G.R., The Diffusion of Literacy in England and Wales in the 19th century.

43. Ibid. p. 248.

44. STEPHENS, W.B., op. cit.

45. Ibid., p.42.

46. Ibid., p.34.

47. ALDRICH, R., Literacy, Illiteracy, Semi-Literacy and Marriage Registers. History of Education, December 1978.

48. CIPOLLA, C.M. Literacy and Development in the West

49. Webb, R.K., op. cit., quoting 23rd Annual Report of the Register General of Births, Deaths and Marriages in England (1860) (1861) p.vii.

50. SARGANT, W.L., op. cit.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid.

53. RAWSON, W. Rawson. Enquiry into the condition of Criminal Offenders in England and Wales with respect to education, or Statistics of Education among the Criminal and General population of England and other Countries. J.S.S.L. (iii) (1840) pp. 331-352.

54. SARGANT op. cit.

55. REESE, Colonel P., communicated in correspondence.

56 (a) HAWKINS, T.H. and BRIMBLE. Adult Education. The Record of the British Army. 1947.

56 (b) WHITE, A.C.T. The Story of Army Education 1643-1963.

57 Ibid. p.23.

58. WEBB, R.K., quoting Statistical Return of the Education .... in 227 ships, 10 Coast Guard Ships, and 5 Divisional Barracks of Royal Marines, P.P. 1867, xliv (36)

59. CIPOLLA, C.M., op. cit., quoting Registrar General's figures.

60. CUMIN, P., H.M.I., Comparison of Two Maritime Districts (Bristol and Plymouth), 1858.

61. Leckhampton Parish Register, 1845.

62. HART, J.M., English Historical Review lxx (1955) Reform of the Borough Police.

63. CRITCHLEY, T.A., A History of the Police in England and Wales 1900-1966 (1967), p.147.

64. HOLYOAKE op. cit., p.101.

65. BONNER, A. British Co-operation p. 518. Model rules cited by Bonner make no mention of disability clauses for illiterates but include as a prime aim "the mutual employment of members, the establishment of schools for the education of children and of libraries and reading rooms for adults."

66. RAWSON, W.Rawson, op. cit., pp. 331-352.

67. WEBB, R.K., op. cit., p.349.

68. MAYHEW, H. London Labour and the London Poor. Prisons of London.

69. Ibid. p. 152.

70. HOLE, J , "Light More Light". Prize Essay 1853.

71. Register of Prisoners remanded in custody for trial at Gloucestershire Assizes 1830

72. HOLE op. cit.

NOTES

CHAPTER 2

1. State of Endowed Schools in Bristol 1836. Appendix to Report of Bristol Statistical Society on Education. Chairman: C.B.FRIPP.

2. BOWEN, F.W.E. Queen Elizabeth's Hospital: the City School, p.70

3. Sermon preached on May 9 1745 by Rt. Reverend Joseph Butler. Quoted with approval by H.M.I. Matthew Arnold in his general report for 1882.

4. Edinburgh Review 1839.

5. Estimated from Bristol Marriage Records.

6. Anon., Thoughts on Education, Union of Classes and Co-operation. Suggested by the late riots at Bristol. London, Roake and Verty, 31 Strand.

7. Ibid.

8. Members of the Bristol Statistical Society which produced its first report in 1836 included Charles Bowles Fripp, Henry Hallam, historian and member of the Statistical Society of London (father of Arthur Hallam, mourned in "In Memoriam"); James Cowles Pritchard, a Quaker physician involved in educational work; Dr. John Addington Symonds, father of J.A.Symonds; Dr. Lant Carpenter, perhaps the leading divine of his age (and father of Mary Carpenter, the educational innovator and philanthropist); Charles Pinney, merchant and mayor; J.M.Gutch, editor of a pro-liberal newspaper, and G.B.Jerrard, a well-known mathematician. It is significant that their first two major surveys concerned education and the state of the poor. (Michael J.Cullen: The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain, pp. 121-123, The Foundations of Empirical Research).

9. GOYDER, D.G. Manual of the System of Instruction. 4th Edition, Bristol 1825.

10. WHITTAKER MSS. Bristol Archives. Letters from school friends to Whittaker, 1823, from DrESTLIN'S School, St. Michael's Hill.

11. First Report of the Commissioners on the Employment of Children 1842. Evidence of E.WARING Esq.

12. Ibid. Evidence of Dr STEWART, Part II, p. 47.

13. LORD ASHLEY, House of Commons, Tuesday 4 August 1840.

14. FRIPP, C.B. Bristol Statistical Society report 1839, op. cit.

15. Ibid.

16. Ibid.

17. BRISTOL TRACTS Vol. 22: The Geological Formation of the Site of Bristol and the Common Seats of Fever and Cholera in 1832.

18. MULHALL, M. Dictionary of Statistics. Routledge 1884.

19. FRIPP, C.B., op. cit.

20. Report of Clifton National School 1812. Bristol City Archives.

21. Ibid. 1820.

22. Letter 16 November 1816 from Mrs. BLATHWAYT, owner of DYRHAM PARK, Gloucestershire, refusing to subscribe to a school at Weston, Somerset. Blathwayt Family: Dyrham Park Archives. B.C.A.

23. Report of Clifton National School. 1825. B.C.A.

24. Report of meeting of the Bristol and Foreign School Society. Bristol Gazette for April 16 1818, B.C.A.

25. Report of Diocesan Board of Education, 1844, B.C.A.

26. First Annual Report of the Friends' Day and Evening Schools, Cutler's Hall, Bristol, 1847. B.C.A.

27. Logbook, St. Augustine's National School. "Rev'd H.Moseley took 1st and 2nd classes in Scripture and Dictation." Entry: 16 August 1866. B.C.A.

28. Ibid. Entry 2 November 1866. B.C.A.

29. Logbook. St. Augustine's School. B.C.A.

30. Logbook. Clifton National School: 3 February 1864 B.C.A.

31. Calculated from Entrance Register of Clifton National School, 1821. B.C.A.

32. Ibid., 1840.

33. Minutes of C.C.E. 1852.

34. Few of the ex-pupils from Clifton National School appear to have been married at St. Andrew's, the Parish Church, though no doubt an exhaustive search would produce a larger sample. Figures drawn from the Entrance Register of the school and the marriage register of the Church. B.C.A.

35. Reports copied into log-book of St. Augustine's School for 1863 (2 December) and 1835 (30 January) respectively.
36. CUMIN, P., op. cit., p. 52.
37. Report copied into log-book of St. Augustine's School, January 24 1866.
38. Ibid., 18 August 1869.
39. Ibid., 22 November 1870.
40. Ibid. 22 May 1867.
41. SS. Philip and Jacob Minute Book 1859-1914. Entry: 28 October 1862.
42. Ibid. 15 April 1864.
43. Ibid. 29 July 1864.
44. Log-book of Baptist Street Wesleyan School.
45. Ibid. Summary of Inspector's report, 28 April 1870.
46. Minutes of C.C.E. 1852.
47. First Annual Report of Friends' Day and Evening Schools, Cutler's Hall 1847.
48. SARJEANT, Charles, master of St. James Barton School for 42 years: evidence to H.M.I.P.Cumin (op. cit. p.227).
49. Report on the Condition of the Poor of Bristol 1884.
50. Rules of the Highbury Schools, Durdham Down, contained in the Minute Book 1850-1887.
51. Minutes of Committee Meetings, Highbury School, February 20 1851.
52. Ibid. 10 March 1851.
53. Evidence of Mr. W.F.LLOYD, Secretary of the Sunday School Union. 1834. Report on Education.
54. C.C.E. Inspectors' Reports 1864. Report of J.Rice Byrne, M.A., Inspector of Church of England Schools in the County of Gloucestershire.
55. Ibid. Report of T.Bowstead Esq., M.A., on Protestant Schools not connected with the Church of England in Gloucestershire, etc.

56. Ibid.

57. C.C.E. Inspectors' Reports 1852: pages 1014 et seq.

58. Log-book, St. Augustine's National School, 8 July 1869.

59. Table V: Religious Distinctions. Report of Bristol Statistical Society on Education 1836. Chairman: C.B.FRIPP.

60. 100 Years of Broadmead Sunday School.

61. Calculated from accounts of the Treasurer of the Bristol Methodist Sunday School Society, Bristol 28 December 1815.

62. A method of Education adopted at Wilder Street Sunday School. Bristol 1819.

63. CUMIN, P. Report op. cit. p.14.

64. Highbury Chapel, Bristol. Sunday School Journal 1886.

65. AYRES,W.F.: Highbury, the First Fifty Years, Independent Press, London, 1963. Also subsequent accounts in typescript loaned by the author.

66. WARDLE, David. English Popular Education 1780-1970, p.60.

67. FRIPP,C.B. Educational Survey, op. cit.

68. CUMIN, P. Report, op. cit.

69. Wilder Street Sunday School Manual, op. cit.

70. First Report of the Commissioners on the employment of children 1842. Evidence of E.WARING Esq.

71. Second Report of the Diocesan Board of Education for the Archdeaconry of Bristol. 19 April 1844.

72. Bristol Mercury 10 November 1849.

73. Admissions Register, Bristol and Gloucester Diocesan Training College for Schoolmistresses, Fishponds.

74. Some information from the late D.S.ELMES' unpublished thesis: Study of Development of Voluntary Training Colleges.

75. C.C.E. Report 1868 p.415.

76. Minutes of Committee, Fishponds Training College, 8 May 1858.

77. Ibid. 4 May 1866.

78. Ibid. 20 May 1859.

79. Ibid. 4 May 1866.

80. Ibid. 22 May 1868.

81. Ibid. 1 June 1869.

82. Calculated from C.C.E. Reports for Training Colleges inspected by H.M.I.Cook 1858.

83. Minutes of Committee 13 May 1857.

84. Ibid. 12 May 1865.

85. Ibid. 4 May 1866.

86. Ibid. 31 July 1866.

87. C.C.E. Report 1858-1859.

88. Minutes of Committee. 7 December 1859.

89. CUMIN, P., op. cit.

90. Ibid. p.48.

91. Felix Farley's Journal 25 May 1839.

92. Ibid. 1 June 1839.

93. Bristol Mercury 8 June 1839.

94. Bristol Mirror 18 May 1839.

95. Bristol Mercury 25 May 1839.

96. Felix Farley's Journal 15 June 1839.

97. Bristol Gazette 19 April 1843.

98. Bristol Mercury 22 April 1843.

99. Ibid. 25 March 1843.

100. Article reprinted from the Standard in the Bristol Gazette 3 May 1843.

101. Bristol Mirror 4 March 1843.

102. Felix Farley's Journal 15 April 1843.

103. Bristol Statistical Society Report on Education 1841.

104. Bristol Gazette 3 May 1843.

105. Felix Farley's Journal. Editorial 17 June 1843.

106. Ibid. 29 June 1843.

107. COSSHAM, Handel. Lecture: On the present state of education. 12 July 1861.

108. CUMIN, P., op. cit., p.228.

109. Report on Employment of Children, op. cit. Evidence of E.WARING.

110. CUMIN, P., op. cit., p.47.

111. Ibid.

112. Parish Records, St. Michael's Without. B.C.A.

113. CUMIN, P., op. cit.

114. Calculated from Parish Records, St. Philip and Jacob. B.C.A.

115. CUMIN, P., op. cit. Evidence of Canon GIRDLESTONE, Dean of Bristol, p.183.

116. Ibid. Evidence of Clergy and Masters of Schools.

117. Felix Farley's Journal, 25 March 1843.

NOTES

CHAPTER III

1. Calculated from marriage records and Bishop's transcripts. B.C.A. National average: Registrar General's published figures.
2. GARLAND, R.B. The work of the Society for the Education of the Poor in Bristol 1811-1870. Unpublished Diploma Dissertation, Bristol.
3. SARGANT, W.L., op. cit.
4. 4th Report of Inspectors of Prisons in Great Britain. (IV) 2-4 1839, pp. 49-53.
5. Calculated from the Streets of the Temple Parish Register 1837-1840, named in the survey.
6. Calculated from marriage records, SS. Philip and Jacob. B.C.A.
7. SARGANT, W.L. op. cit. p.111.

NOTES

CHAPTER IV

1. Mayhew, H. The Prisons of London. Pentonville, p.295.
2. Calculated from marriage registers and Bishop's transcripts. G.C.A.
3. SARGANT, W.L. op. cit.
4. Census 1800.
5. Abstract of Education Returns 1833.
6. Education Census of Great Britain 1851. H.M.S.O. 1854.
7. C.C.E. 1852.
8. Report of Special Poor Law Commissioners on the Employment of Women and Children in Agriculture. P.P. 1843 xii (510). Quoted by R.K.WEBB, op. cit.
9. SARGANT,W.L. op. cit.
10. Second Report on the State of Agriculture P.P. 1836 viii (189) Qq 5020, 5022. Quot ed by R.K.Webb op. cit.
11. Reports to the Commissioners on Employment of Children 1842.
12. Abstract of the answers and returns to the Population Act, 41 George III, 1800.
13. SS. Philip and Jacob marriage registers.
14. Reports from the Assistant Handloom Weavers Commissioners. P.P. 1839 xiii (159) 25 and 44-5. Quoted by R.K.Webb op. cit.
15. Communicated verbally by Managing Director of Tanner and Butler Ltd., Frome.
16. HAMMOND, J.C. and B. The Skilled Labourer 1760-1832.
17. Ibid. quoting H.O.40.19. pp. 162/163.
18. Ibid. quoting H.O. 42.61 March 26 1826 p.200.
19. LASLETT. Readership deduced from lists of subscribers to books in Scotland. Local Population Studies. No. 3 Autumn 1969.

20. WATT, I. The Rise of the Novel, p.47.

21. ENGELS, F. Condition of the Working Classes in England in 1844. Quoted by R.K.Webb op. cit.

22. Report to the Commissioners on the Employment of Children. Evidence of E.WARING Esq. Session 1842. Note to 137.

23. COSSHAM, H. op. cit.

24. Ibid.

25. Summary of tables constructed from prison and marriage registers. G.C.A.

26. JONES,M.G. The Charity School Movement.

27. Ibid. Appendix p. 355.

28. 1818 Parliamentary Survey of Education quoted by G.H.HAINTON and A.PLATTS.

29. Abstract of Education returns.

30. HAINTON,G.H. and PLATTS A. and Education Returns 1833.

31. HAINTON and PLATTS p.45.

32. HEWELSFIELD PARISH Bishop's Transcripts. G.C.A.

33. Calculated from Gloucestershire B.Ts. 1845.

34. SANDERSON, M. Social change and elementary education in industrial Lancashire 1740-1840. Northern History iii, 1968.

35. SCHOFIELD, R.S. Dimensions of Illiteracy 1750-1850, Explorations in Economic History X.

36. STONE, L. Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900. Past and Present, No. 42. p.111. 1969.

37. FLETCHER, J. op. cit.

38. Ibid. p.212.

39. SCHOFIELD, R.S. The measurement of literacy. Literacy in Traditional Societies. p.324. Editor: J.GOODY.

40. HOLE, James. op. cit.

41. FRIPP,C.B. op. cit.

42. Ibid.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

1. ALTICK R.D. op. cit.

2. Ibid. quoted by p.35 from T.W.HERBERT: John Wesley as Editor and Author (Princeton 1940).

3. ALTICK R.D. op. cit.,quoting mainly from Taylor: Early Opposition to the English Novel, who quotes some 30 contemporary attacks on education from this standpoint.

4. ALTICK R.D., quoting Chambers' Journal XI 1840, 8.

5. Ibid., quoting Newspaper Stamp Committee. Qq 3248-1.

6. Ibid., quoting Public Libraries Committee Qq. 1381-1402.

7. Ibid., quoting Hansard Series 3 CXXXVII (1855), column 1144.

8. WEBB, R.K.: The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848 (Literacy and Social Tension). 1955.

9. Ibid., quoting C.D.COLLETT, History of the Taxes on Knowledge (London 1899), i, 30.

10. Ibid. p.59.

11. Ibid., quoting Spectator 8 January 1831.

12. James, Louis: Fiction for the Working Man 1830-1850.

13. DALZIEL, Margaret: Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago, quoting Home Magazine 1856.

14. Ibid., p. 78.

15. Ibid., quoting Family Herald story.

16. Ibid., p.96.

17. Ibid., p.96.

18. Ibid., p.121.

19. Ibid., p.99.

20. Ibid., p.107.

21. Ibid., p.137.

22. EISENSTEIN, E : Some Conjectures about the Impact of Printing on Western Society and Thought. A preliminary survey. Journal of Modern History vol. 40, No. 1, March 1968.

23. LACKINGTON. Memoirs p.257.

Notes, Chapter 5, continued

24. WRIGHT, Thomas (The Journeyman Engineer): The Great Unwashed. First published 1868.

25. ADAMS, W.W.: Memoirs of a Social Atom.

26. LACKINGTON, op. cit.

27. ADAMS, op. cit.

28. JAMES, Louis, information supplied in correspondence: 18.1.76.

29. JAMES, Louis, quoted in Fiction for the Working Man p.116 from Friends Tract Association Report 1832 p.2.

30. Ibid., quoting Wesleyan Tract Reporter NS XXIX (1850) p.116.

31. SPINNEY. E.H. Cheap Repository Tracts: The Library Vol. 20 4th series, p. 310.

32. WEBB, R.K., op. cit., paraphrasing Special Committee on Education P.P. 1835 vii 52. Q 607.

33. JAMES, op. cit., quoting M.G.JONES: Hannah More, Cambridge 1952.

34. WHITELEY, J.H. Wesley's England, p.325.

35. ALTICK, op. cit., p.75.

36. Ibid., p.102, quoting Henry Mayhew.

36a MAYHEW, Henry, London Labour and the London Poor, Vol. I, p.235.

37. WEBB, op. cit., quoting J.S.S.L. I December 1838 457-8. Ibid. XI August 1848 218.

37a. Information supplied by BARRIE TRINDER in correspondence 16.3.1977.

38. WEBB op. cit.

39. Ibid., quoting S.G.GREEN, Prize Essay 1850.

40. Ibid.

41. WEBB, op. cit., p.27.

41a FRIPP, C.B., op. cit.

42. POLE, Thomas: A History of the Origin and Progress of Adult Schools, p.9.

42a Details communicated by A.E.BARKER, archivist and librarian of the S.P.C.K., in correspondence.

43. Bristol Committee of S.P.C.K., report 30 December 1819. S.P.C.K. archives.

44. Ibid.

45. LAQUEUR, T., Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture.

Notes, Chapter 5, continued

46. TRINDER, B : Religious Tracts as Sources of Local History: some West Midland Examples. The Local Historian, Vol. 10, No. 3, 1972.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. JAMES, L op. cit. p.121.

50. SPINNEY, G.H., op. cit.

51. ALTICK, R.D., op. cit., quoting Hogden: Workers' Education, p.30.

52. S.P.C.K. Minutes of Bristol Branch 1819. S.P.C.K. archives.

53. ALTICK, R.D., op. cit.

54. Communicated by Dr. Frank Cumbers in correspondence, 18.3.77.

55. WHITELEY, J.H., op. cit.

56. ALTICK, op. cit., p. 36, quoting S.G.GREEN and QUINLAN: Victorian Prelude.

57. RATTENBURY, J.E.: Wesley's legacy to the World, quoting Professor HALEVY.

58. AUSTIN, E.: Anecdotage: Stray Leaves from the Notebooks of a Provincial Reporter.

59. HOBSBAWM, E.B. and RUDE: Albion's Fatal Tree, quoting COBBETT.

60. SMITH, F : The SDUK 1826-1846: A Social and Bibliographical Evaluation. School of Library Service, Dalhousie University 1974.

61. Ibid., quoting C.KNIGHT: Passages of a Long Life, p.207.

62. Ibid.

63. Williams, R : The Long Revolution, p.214.

64. SHEPARD, L quoting Charles HINDLEY in introduction to Curiosities of Street Literature.

65. NEUBERG, V.: Popular Education in the Eighteenth Century, p.121.

66. Ibid., p.137.

67. COLLISON, R.B., Street Literature, p.2.

68. ASHTON: Chapbooks of the Eighteenth Century. First published 1882, reprinted 1966.

69. NEUBERG, V. Introduction to The Penny Histories.

70. JAMES, L , op. cit.

71. SHEPARD, L , op. cit.

Notes, Chapter 5, continued

72. Ibid.

73. ALTICK, R.D., op. cit., quoting C.HINDLEY, History of the Catnach Press.

74. NEUBERG, V.: Popular Education 1800-1870, p.174, quoting Thomas FROST: Forty Years' Recollections (1860).

75. JAMES, L , op. cit, p.xii.

76. Bristol Examiner, No. 3, Saturday 7 December 1850, Letter III, Part of Out Parish of SS. Philip and Jacob.

77. NEUBERG, V., Introduction to The Penny Histories.

78. HYETT, A., Notes on the First Bristol and Gloucestershire Printers (reprinted from the Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, vol. xx, pp. 38-51.)

79. Gloucestershire Notes and Queries, vol. iii, pp. 226-228.

80. JONES, M.G.; Hannah More, p.148.

81. Ibid. p.147, quoting J.C.COLQUHOUN.

82. MORE, Hannah: Cheap Repository Tracts: Sorrowful Sam or The Two Blacksmiths.

83. Ibid.

84. BM PP 2465 1-13 London Printed by E.James for the Company of Stationers, 1711.

85. John CHENEY and his Descendants: Printers in Banbury since 1767, p.25.

86. Ibid., p.23.

87. CHENEY, C.R., Early Banbury Chapbooks and Broadsides. Library vol. XVII.

88. Bristol City Archives.

89. HINDLEY, C : The Life and Times of James Catnach, p.382.

90. Ibid. p.186.

91. WRIGHT, T : The Great Unwashed, 1868.

92. Title pages of publications.

93. PLOMER, H.R., Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers 1726-1775.

94. PENDRED, J , Earliest Dictionary of the Book Trade, 1785 (republished 1955 from single copy in the Bodleian.)

95. CRANFIELD, G.A., The Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760, Oxford 1962, p.197.

96. WILES, R.M., Freshest Advices: Early Provincial Newspapers in England.

Notes, Chapter 5, continued

97. CRANFIELD, op. cit., quoting advertisements in Northampton Mercury and Gloucester Journal handbill 10 March 1721 respectively.

98. HAMLYN, H : Eighteenth Century Circulating Libraries in England. The Library: Fifth Series vol. I, 1946.

99. Ibid., quoting SADLEIR, M.: Introduction to World Classics edition of Northanger Abbey.

100. Ibid., p.208.

101. Ibid., quoting Bonner and Middleton's Bristol Journal 1 February 1794.

102. Ibid. citing The Wealthy Farmers, p.18.

103. KITE, V.J., Libraries in Bath 1618-1964. Unpublished F.L.A. thesis, quoting poster from Bath Chronicle.

104. ALTICK, op. cit., p.237, quoting GREENWOOD, Public Libraries.

105. Ibid.

106. Ibid.

107. Calculated from loan figures of Bristol, Bath and Manchester Libraries.

108. ALTICK op. cit., quoting Chambers' Journal, ser. 6 III (1900), 134-36.

109. ALTICK, op. cit., p.90.

110 Ackowledgements to Alan Stokes for material concerning readability.

111. NEUBERG.V.

112, JAMES, L op. cit., p.17.

113. Ibid., p.17.

114. Ibid., Footnote, p.194.

115. ADAMS, W.E., op. cit., pp. 168-169.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary Sources

School Log-books

Clifton National School 1862-1870
Bishopsworth National School 1862-1870
St. Augustine's National School 1862-1870
Baptist Street, Wesleyan School 1864-1898
Practice School, Diocesan Training College, Fishponds.

Committee Books

Committee Book of the Certified Industrial School, Park Row, Bristol
St. James's Back Ragged School
St. Philip and St. Jacob Minute Book
Highbury Schools, Durdham Down 1851-1878
Minute Book of the Bristol and Gloucester Diocesan Training College, Fishponds
SPCK Minutes

Reports

Clifton National School 1812
First Annual Report of the Friends' Day and Evening School 1847
Cock Road Daily School Society 1842
Dings British School 1842
Reports of British and Foreign Society (Bristol) 1841, 1846
Digest of Parochial Returns (Bristol) 1819
Lord Kerry Report on the State of Education of the Poor 1833, published 1835
First Report of the Commissioners on Employment of Children 1842
Second Report of Bristol Diocesan Board of Education 1844
Cumin, Patrick, H.M.I. Comparison of Two Maritime Districts (Bristol and Plymouth) 1858
CCE Report
Census of Great Britain 1851. Education in England and Wales. Report and Tables. H.M.S.O. 1854.

Marriage Registers or Bishop's Transcripts

All those available for specified years in Bristol and Gloucester Archives.

Prison Registers

Register of prisoners remanded in custody pending Gloucester Assizes 1812-1844 (Gloucester City Archives).

Statistical Surveys

Fripp, C.B. Statistical Survey of Educational Provision in Bristol 1836, 1841
" " Condition of the Poor of Bristol 1838, 1839

Chapbooks

Tewkesbury Chapbooks: Harding Collection,: Bodleian and Gloucester City Library

Banbury Chapbooks: Cheney and Son, Banbury

Cheap Repository Tracts: Bristol City Library

Letters

Letters from sailors written during Napoleonic Wars.
SS. Philip and Jacob papers, Bristol City Archives.

Secondary Sources

ADAMS, W.E. — Memoirs of a Social Atom. Introduction by John Saville. 1903 REPRINTED N.Y. 1968

ADAMSON, J.W. — The Extent of Literacy in England
The Library Series 4.10. pp. 166-8 (1929)
Mainly concerned with 15th/16th centuries and arguing for higher proportion of readers than generally supposed.

" " — The Illiterate Anglo-Saxon Cambridge 1946

ALDISS, H.G. — Book Production and Distribution 1625-1800

ALDRICH, R. — Literacy, illiteracy, semi-literacy and marriage registers.
History of Education Society Bulletin 22 1978

ALFORD, B. — W.D.Wills and the Development of the Tobacco Industry. (Interesting material on development of printed packaging). METHUEN 1973

ALLNUTT, W.H. — History of printing in Stratford-on-Avon. Transactions of the Birmingham Archaeological Society, vol. 67, 1951, pp. 55-70.

ALTICK, R.D. — The English Common Reader University of Chicago Press 1957

" — Victorian People and Ideas DENT 1974

ANDERSON, C.A. and BOWMAN, J.J. (Editors) — Education and Economic Development, chapters 17,18,20 CASS 1971

ARROWSMITH, J.W. — Dictionary of Bristol. 1906.

ASHTON, T.S. — Economic and Social Investigations in Manchester 1833-1933 (A centenary history of the Manchester Statistical Society). 1934

ASHTON, J. — Chap-books of the 18th century 1882 reprinted 1966

AUSTIN, E. — Anecdotage (Stray leaves from the notebook of a Provincial Reporter). CLIFTON 1872

AUSTIN,R. — Catalogue of the Gloucestershire Collection 1928

AYRES, W F. — The Highbury Story; Highbury Chapel, Bristol. "The First Fifty Years". Independent Press 1963

ARNOLD, M — Reports on Elementary Schools 1852-18882

BAKER,E. — Catalogue of books relating to Somerset

BAKER,W.P. Parish Registers and Illiteracy in East Yorkshire East Yorkshire Historical Society 1961

BAMFORD, S Early Days. Passages in the Life of a Radical. 1848

BARNARD,H.C. History of English Education 1760-1944 University of London Press

BARTHES, R Writing Degree Zero 1965

BARROW, E.M. Appendix to the second report of the Bristol Diocesan Board of Education (1844) Pamphlet 8198

BARTLEY, G C.T. The Schools for the People Bell & Daldy, 1871

BEST,G.F.A. The Religious Difficulties of National Education 1800-1870 Cambridge Historical Journal XII 1956

BIRCHENOUGH,C. History of Elementary Education in England and Wales 1800- 1914, W.B.Clive, London

BOND,B.J. Recruiting the Victorian Army Victorian Studies V (1961-2), pp. 331-8

BODY,A.H. John Wesley and Education M.Ed. dissertation, Manchester, 1935 Published Epworth Press, 1936

BONNER, A The Co-operative Movement 1970

BOWEN, F.W.E. Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, Bristol The City School p.70 in 1842 a boy was dismissed upon admission because he was proved illegitimate. Most boys left at 14.

BOWYER-BOWER,T.A. Sources for the History of Education in the British Army during the 19th century B.J.E.S. iv (1955-6) pp. 71-77

BRIGGS, A.(Ed) Chartist Studies MACMILLAN 1959

Bristol Examiner Letters on the condition of the Working-Classes in Bristol and its vicinity

BROAD,E. The Christian Churches and the formation and maintenance of a system of state-aided elementary education in England and Wales 1938

CARTER, David — Social and Political Influence of the Bristol Churches 1830-1914
Unpublished thesis. M.Litt. Bristol

CHARITIES - REPORT — Report of the Committee appointed to enquire into the condition of the Bristol Poor 1884 with a digest of Bristol charities
W.Lewis & Sons Bristol 1885 B.R.L. 2420

CHENEY,C.R. — Early Banbury Chapbooks and Broadsides
Library Vol. XVII

CLARKE,W.K.L. — A Short History of the S.P.C.K. (1959)

CLOUSTON,W.A. — Popular Tales and Fictions, their Migrations and Transformations London 1887

CIPOLLA, C M. — Literacy and Development in the West 1969

COLEMAN, B.I. — The Incidence of Education in Mid-Century England

COSSHAM, H. — Present State of Education: a lecture delivered at Pucklechurch July 12 1861 (refers to Bristol colliery districts)
Somer-tons, Bristol (1861)

COX, J.C. — The Parish Registers of England 1910

CRANFIELD,G.A. — The Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760 1962

CRITCHLEY, T.A. — History of the Police in England and Wales 900-1966
1967

CRUSE, A — The Englishman and his Books in the early 19th Century 1930
The Victorians and their books

CULLEN, M J. — The Statistical Movement in Early Victorian Britain 1976

CUMBERS, F. — The Book Room: an account of Methodist Publishing
Epworth Press 1956

DALZIEL, M. — Popular Fiction 100 Years Ago 1957

DAVIES, D — The case of labourers and husbandry (1795)

DICEY — The DICEYS and the Chapbook Trade
The Library, September 1966

DOBBS,A.E. — Education and Social Movements 1700-1850
LONGMANS 1919

EDWARDS,M.L. — After Wesley EPWORTH 1935

EISENSTEIN,E.L. — Some conjectures about the impact of printing on modern society and thought (Preliminary report)
Journal of Modern History, Vol. 40, no. 1, March 1968

ELLEY, W.B. — The Assessment of Readability by noun frequency counts
Reading Research Quarterly Spring 1969 Vol. 4 no. 3 pp. 411-427

ELLIS,A. — A History of Children's Reading and Literature LONDON 1968

ELLIS, K. — The Post Office in the 18th Century
O.U.P. 1958

ELMES,D.S. — Voluntary Colleges for teacher training: with particular reference to Fishponds Diocesan, late the College of St. Matthias
Unpublished thesis

FELIX FARLEY'S JOURNAL — List (by Catalogue and topographical source) of advertisements in F.F.J. for six months of 1760

FINBERG,H.P.R. — Gloucestershire Studies LEICESTER UNIVERSITY 1957

FIROR, R A. — Folkways in Thomas Hardy
New York Reprint 1961

FOSTER, J — An Essay on the Evils of Popular Ignorance
Bristol, John Wright 1839

FREEMAN — Freeman's word list for teaching illiterate adults - 1813
Studies in Adult Education 6 October 1974 pp. 161-9

FROST, T — 40 Years' Recollections (1880)

FURET,R. and OZOUF,J. — Literacy and industrialisation: the case of the Departement du Nord en France 1976
Journal of European Economic History 5

GARLAND, R.B. — The work of the National Society for the Education of the Poor in Bristol 1811-1870
Dip. 1961

GAY,J.D. — The Geography of Religion in England DUCKWORTH 1971

GLASS,D.V. — Education and Social Change in Modern England
Reprinted in Education, Economy and Society
Editor: A.H.HALSEY

GOODY ed. — Literacy in traditional societies CAMBRIDGE 1966

GOYDER,D.E. — Manual of the System of Instruction
4th Edition 1825

GRAFF, H. J. — Pauperism, misery and vice: illiteracy and criminality in the 19th century
Journal of Social History II

" — Towards a meaning of literacy: literacy and social structure in Hamilton, Ontario, 1861
History of Education Quarterly

" — The Literacy Myth
Literacy and social structure in the 19th century city
New York 1979

GREEN, E — On some Somerset chapbooks
Somerset Archaeological Society Vol. 24

HAINTON, G.H. — The development of Elementary Education in Gloucestershire 1648-1848
Bristol M.A. 1952

HAMLYN,H. M. — 18th century circulating libraries in England
Library 5th Series I (1946) 197

HAMMOND, J.C. and B. — The Skilled Labourer 1760-1830 1979

" " " — The Age of the Chartists KELLY N.Y. 1967

HARRISON,B.H. — Tracts in the Temperance Movement
"Drunkards and Reformers"
History Today May 1963

HARRISON,J.F.C. — Learning and Living 1790-1960
Routledge, Kegan & Paul 1961

HART.C.E. — Free Miners of the Forest of Dean GLOUCESTER 1953

HATLEY, V A. — Literacy at Northampton 1761-1900
Some further interim figures
Northamptonshire Past and Present, 5.1974

HINDLEY, C — The Life and times of James Catnach 1878

" — Curiosities of Street Literature
introduced by Leslie Shepherd (1966)

HOBSBAWM, E.B. — The machine-breakers Past and Present 1952
Labouring men " 1963

" & RUDE, G. — Captain Swing 1969
Primitive Rebels 1963

HOLE, J — Light, more light London 1860

HOLLIS, P — The Pauper Press O.U.P. 1970

HOLYOAKE G.J. — The History of Co-operation 1891

HONE, W. — The Political House that Jack Built 1821

HORN, P — Labouring Life in the Victorian Countryside 1976

HOSKINS, W.G. — Local History in England 1959

HURT, J.S. — Bringing Literacy to Rural England: the Hertfordshire Case London and Chichester 1972

INGLIS,K.S. — Patterns of religious worship in 1851
Journal of Ecclesiastical History XI 1960

JAMES, L — Fiction for the working man 1963
Print and the People 1976

JOHANSSON, E — The History of Literacy in Sweden in comparison with some other countries
Educational Reports Umeå No. 12 1977

JOHNSON, R. — Educational Policy and Social Control in Early Victorian England
Past and Present 49 (1970) pp. 96-119

JONES, M. . — Hannah More

KITE, V.J. — Libraries in Bath 1618-1964
unpublished F.L.A. thesis

KLARE, G.R. — The role of word frequency in readability
Elementary English 45, 1. pp. 12-22 1968

LACKINGTON, J — Memoirs of the 45 first years of the life of - 1810

LAQUEUR, T.W. — The Cultural Origin of Popular Literacy in England 1500-1850
Oxford Review of Education, 2, 1976

" — Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850
Yale University Press 1976

LARCOMBE, H.J. — Progress of Education in Bristol
Unpublished M.A. thesis, Bristol

LASLETT, P. — The World We Have Lost 1963

LAWSON, J and SILVER, H — A Social History of Education in England 1973

LAWSON, J and SILVER, H. — The State and Voluntary Education 1830-1869

LAURENSON, D.T. and SWINGEWOOD, A. — The Sociology of Literature 1972

LEAVIS, Q.D. — Fiction and the Reading Public 1932

LEE, A J. — The Origins of the Popular Press 1855-1914 1976

LEECH, J. — Diocesan Board of Education for the Archdeaconry of Bristol
2nd Report with statements of accounts to March 25th 1844

LEWIS, M.M. — The Importance of Illiteracy 1953

LLOYD, C — The English Seaman 1200-1860 COLLINS 1968

LOVETT, W — Life and Struggles 1876

LUCAS, G.R. — The Diffusion of Literacy in England and Wales in the 19th Century
Studies in Education 3 July 1961 pp. 240-248

MANTON, Jo — Mary Carpenter and the Children of the Streets 1976

MATTHEWS, H F. — Methodism and the Education of the People, 1791-1851
Epworth Press 1949

MAYHEW, H — London Labour and the London Poor 1851-61
Prisons of London REPRINT CASS 1968

MONEY, J. — Local politics and popular articulacy in the Birmingham area in the age of the American Revolution
Historical Journal, XIV 1, 15

MULHALL, M.G. — The Dictionary of Statistics 1892

McCANN, W.P. — Elementary Education in England and Wales on the eve of the 1870 Education Act
Journal of Educational Administration and History ii no. 1
Dec. 1969 p.25

McLUHAN, M — The Gutenberg Galaxy 1962

NEUBERG, V. — Literacy in 18th Century England: a caveat
Local Population Studies No. 2 Spring 1969

" — Popular Education in Eighteenth Century England. A study of the origins of the mass reading public
London 1971

" Introduction by — The Penny Histories O.U.P. 1968

NORRIS, H.E. — The Booksellers and Printers of Cirencester
pp. 16 Cirencester 1912

OSBORNE — The Osborne Collection of Early Children's Books
Useful list of publishers

PENDRED, J. — The Earliest Dictionary of the Book Trade 1785
Reprinted from single copy in the Bodleian 1955.3

POLE, T — A history of the origin and purpose of Trade Schools
Bristol, 1814
New Edition: The Woburn Press 1969
(By an American Quaker Physician who was among the founders of the Bristol Adult School.)

POLE, T. — A history of the origin and progress of Adult Schools
BRISTOL 1814

POLE, T — Observations relative to Infant Schools etc.
Bristol, D.G.Goyder 1893

PLOMER, H.R. — Dictionary of Printers and Booksellers 1726-1775 1932

PORTER, G.R. — The Progress of the Nation 1851

PROPP, V — Morphology of the Russian Folk-Tale TEXAS UNIVERSITY 1971

PUGH, R.B. — Sources for the history of English primary schools
B.J.E.S. vol. no. 1 (1952)

QUINLAN, M.J. — Victorian Prelude CASS 1965

RAWSON, W.R. — Enquiry into condition of criminal offenders with respect to education etc.
J.S.S.L. iii (1840) pp. 331-352

ROBINSON, H. — The British Post Office
Princeton 1948

ROYLE, E — Mechanics' Institutes and the working classes 1840-1860
Historical Journal XIV 2, 305
University of Birmingham

SANDERSON, M. — Social Change and Elementary Education in Industrial Lancashire 1780-1840
Northern History iii (1968)

SARGANT, W.L. — Progress of Education
Journal of the Royal Statistical Society
No. 30 1867

SCHOFIELD, R.S. — Dimensions of Illiteracy
Explorations in Economic History
Vol. 10 1972-3

" — Measurement of Literacy in Pre-Industrial England
(Literacy in Traditional Societies ed. Goody, J.)

SHEPHARD, L — History of Street Literature 1973

SHEPHERD, T.B. — Methodism and Literature in the 18th Century 1940

SHUMAN, H.S., TUKELES,A., and SMITH, D.H. — Some social and psychological effects and non-effects of literacy in new nations
Economic Development and Cultural Change 16 (1967) 1-14

SILVER, H. — Aspects of Neglect: the strange case of Victorian popular education
Oxford Review of Education, 3, 1977.

SIMON, B. — Studies in the History of Education 1780-1880
Lawrence & Wishart, London 3 vols 1960-74

SMITH, B.J. (Editor) — Gloucestershire Historical Studies
Bristol University Extra Mural Studies publication 1974-75

SMITH, H — The Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge 1826-1846
A Social and Biographical Evaluation
School of Library Services, Dalhousie University 1974

SPINNEY, G.H. — Cheap Repository Tracts: Hazard and Marshall Edition
The Library Vol. 20 4th series pp. 295-340

STEINBERG, S.H. — Five hundred years of printing
Penguin 1965

STEPHENS, W.B. — Illiteracy and Schooling in the Provincial Towns 1640-1870: a comparative approach London 1977

STEWART, W C — Quakers and Education as seen in their schools in England
Epworth, 1953

STOKES, A — An Introduction to Readability Open University 1977

STONE, L. — Literacy and Education in England 1640-1900
Past and Present No. 42 February 1969

STURT, M. — The Education of the People 1967

SUTHERLAND, G — Study of the History of Education
History LIV 1969

" — Elementary Education in the Nineteenth Century
Historical Association 1971

SWAISH, Sir J — Chronicles of Broadmead Church 1927

TATE, W.E. — The Parish Chest
3rd Edition 1960

THOMAS, D.M. — Biography of Urijah Rees Thomas 1902

THOMPSON, E.P. — Albion's Fatal Tree
The Crime of Anonymity

" — The making of the English Working Class (1963)
1780-1830

" — Whigs and hunters and the origin of the Black Act
1975

THOMPSON, R. (Ed.) — Samuel Pepys Penny Merriments
Constable 1976

TOMBS, R.C. — The British Royal Mail
Arrowsmith

TOMPKINS, J.M.S. — The Popular Novel in England
1770-1800

TRINDER, B — Religious Tracts as a Source of Local History

The Local Historian Vol. 10 No. 3 1972

UNDERHILL, W.W.F. — A Study of Public Opinion in Bristol between
1865-71 on the Provision of Elementary Education
Dip. 1963

VICINUS, M — The Industrial Muse; a study of 19th century
British Working Class literature

" — The Study of Victorian Popular Culture

Victorian Studies (18) 1975 pp. 473-83

WARDLE, D. — English Popular Education 1780-1970

WARDROPER, J. — Kings, Lords and Wicked Libellers
Satire and Protest 1760-1837

WATT, I — Rise of the Novel

WATTS, W.W. — Shilling Shockers of the Gothic School

WEARMOUTH, R.F. — Methodism and Working Class Movements
London 1937
pp. 120-1 145-63

WEBB, R.K. — The British Working Class Reader 1790-1848
London 1955

" — Literacy among the working classes in 19th century
Scotland
Scottish Historical Review
xxxiii October 1954

" — Working Class Readers in Early Victorian England
English Historical Review 1950

WEST, E.G. Education and the Industrial Revolution
Batsford 1975

" Resource, Allocation and Growth in Early 19th century Education
Economic History Review April 1970

" Education and the State; a Study in Political Economy 1970

WHITELEY, J.H. Wesley's England 1938

WHITING, J.R.S Prison Reform in Gloucestershire LONDON 1975

WILDER STREET SUNDAY SCHOOL Method of Education adopted in Wilder Street Sunday School, Bristol
J.C.Fuller Bristol 1819

WILLIAMS, D.R.A. Elementary Education in the Forest of Dean
Unpublished M.A. Thesis Bristol University 1962

WILLIAMS, R. The Long Revolution 1961

WINCHESTER, I How many ways to universal literacy ? 1978 & 1980

WRIGHT, T. (The Journeyman Engineer) The Great Unwashed 1868 (REPRINTED 1970)